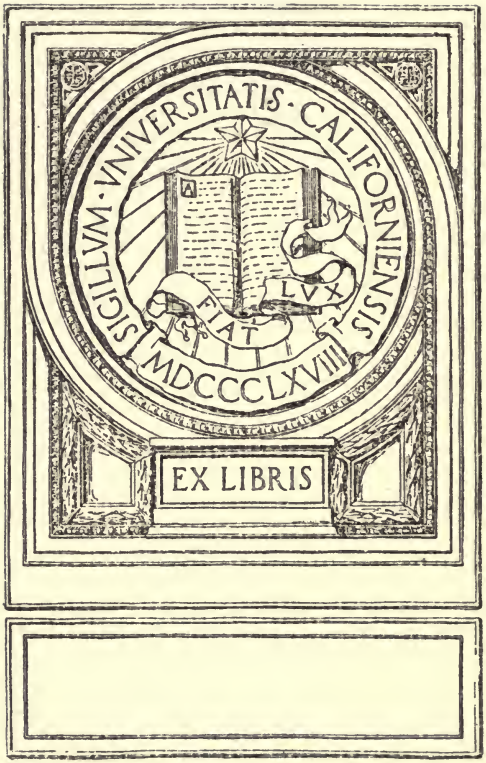
THE AYESHA

BEING THE ADVENTURES
OF THE LAMBING SQUAD OF

THE EMDEN

BY KAPITÄN-LEUTNANT

VON MÜCKE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THE "AYESHA"

VON MÜCKE

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BEING

THE ADVENTURES OF THE LANDING SQUAD

OF THE

"EMDEN"

BY

KAPITÄNLEUTNANT

HELLMUTH VON MÜCKE

TRANSLATED BY HELENE S. WHITE

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

The translator has so enjoyed rendering this little volume into English, that she feels impelled to testify to the pleasure it gave her, and to express a hope that it may find many readers who will follow its record of valiant deeds with as great interest.

That men placed in almost daily peril of their lives can retain their sense of humor and a kindly attitude toward men and circumstances throughout a desperate struggle with adverse conditions is a happy testimony to the buoyancy and to the superiority to the merely physical that courage in the face of danger begets.

Although always bravely confident, there is an engaging ingenuousness and freedom from self-conceit in Lieutenant von Mücke's delightful recital of his amazing achievement, while his never failing appreciation of the humorous side of the situation illumines the entire narrative as with flashes of sunshine.

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The translator desires also to acknowledge her indebtedness to an earlier but unpublished translation of the book by Mrs. Anne Richmond Vaughan.

HELENE S. WHITE

January, 4th, 1917.

FOREWORD

That TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN FICTION is amply illustrated in the following gripping narrative. I have read practically all the stories and yarns of this war, many in their original languages, but I have found none to surpass this interesting tale. In the years to come, all men, especially those "who go down to the sea in ships," will find in these adventures some very profitable lessons in perseverance, resourcefulness and courage. Although this feat may be dimmed by the light of the major operations of the war, I predict that no reader who has once started to read this book will fail to complete it, nor on completion, will he fail to say that he has enjoyed a most interesting series of adventures.

J. H. KLEIN, JR.,
Lieutenant, U. S. Navy.

WASHINGTON, D. C.
3 January, 1917

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THE "AYESHA"

Chapter I

KEELING ISLAND

"I REPORT for duty the landing squad from the ship, — three officers, six petty officers, and forty men strong."

It was on the ninth of November, 1914, at six o'clock in the morning that I reported for duty to the commanding officer of his Majesty's ship, "Emden," Captain von Mueller, at the gangway of the ship. The "Emden" was lying at anchor in Port Refuge, a harbor formed by Keeling Reefs. Alongside were the two cutters in which the officers and men of the landing squad had already taken their places. The steam launch was ready to push off and tow them ashore. My orders were

to destroy the wireless telegraph and cable station on Direction Island, which is the most northerly island of the Keeling group, and to bring back with me, in so far as possible, all signal books, secret code books, and the like.

Three cables run from Direction Island, one line to Mauritius, another to Perth in Australia, and a third to Batavia. As this station was the last absolutely British connection between Australia and the motherland — the other cables having been cut by some of the other ships of our cruising fleet — we had every reason to suppose that we would meet with vigorous military resistance. For this reason we were taking with us all of the four machine guns that the "Emden" carried. Two were aboard the steam launch, the others had been put on the cutters. The men were equipped with rifles, side arms, and pistols. The launch took the cutters in tow, and we were off for Direction Island.

Even quite small boats must pick their way

very carefully while within the waters of this atoll,[1] in order to avoid the numerous, constantly changing coral reefs. The course that we were to take from the ship to the point at which we were to land, covered a distance of about 3000 meters.

Direction Island is very flat, and is covered with a luxuriant growth of tall palms. Among their towering tops we could discern the roofs of the European houses and the high tower of the wireless station. This was our objective point, and I gave orders to steer directly for it. Just below our landing place a small white sailing vessel was riding at anchor.

"Shall we destroy that, too?" inquired one of my lieutenants, pointing to the little schooner.

"Certainly," was my answer. "It has sailed on its last voyage. Detail a man at once to be ready with the explosive cartridges."

With our machine guns and firearms ready for action, we landed at a little dock on the

[1] Group of coral islands.

beach, without meeting with resistance of any kind, and, falling into step, we promptly proceeded to the wireless station. The destruction of the little white sailboat was deferred for the time being, as I wished first of all to find out how affairs on shore would develop.

We quickly found the telegraph building and the wireless station, took possession of both of them, and so prevented any attempt to send signals. Then I got hold of one of the Englishmen who were swarming about us, and ordered him to summon the director of the station, who soon made his appearance, — a very agreeable and portly gentleman.

"I have orders to destroy the wireless and telegraph station, and I advise you to make no resistance. It will be to your own interest, moreover, to hand over the keys of the several houses at once, as that will relieve me of the necessity of forcing the doors. All firearms in your possession are to be delivered immediately. All Europeans on the island are to as-

semble in the square in front of the telegraph building."

The director seemed to accept the situation very calmly. He assured me that he had not the least intention of resisting, and then produced a huge bunch of keys from out his pocket, pointed out the houses in which there was electric apparatus of which we had as yet not taken possession, and finished with the remark: "And now, please accept my congratulations."

"Congratulations! Well, what for?" I asked with some surprise.

"The Iron Cross has been conferred on you. We learned of it from the Reuter telegram that has just been sent on."

We now set to work to tear down the wireless tower. The men in charge of the torpedoes quickly set them in place. The stays that supported the tower were demolished first, and then the tower itself was brought down and chopped into kindling wood. In the telegraph

rooms the Morse machines were still ticking busily. What the messages were we could not decipher, for they were all in secret code. But we chuckled with both amusement and satisfaction as we pictured to ourselves the astonishment of the senders, who were waiting in vain for a reply to their messages, for, from the vigorous action of the apparatus, we concluded that some information was eagerly desired. But this, to our regret, it was not in our power to furnish.

Our next duty was quite to the taste of my vigorous boys in blue. A couple of heavy axes were soon found, and, in a few minutes, Morse apparatus, ink bottles, table legs, cable ends, and the like were flying about the room. "Do the work thoroughly!" had been our orders. Every nook and corner were searched for reserve apparatus and other like matter, and everything that bore any semblance of usefulness in a wireless station was soon destroyed. Unfortunately this fate was shared by a seis-

mometer that had been set up on the island. In their zeal my men had mistaken it for a lately invented addition to the telegraph service.

To locate and cut the submarine cables was the most difficult part of our task. A chart, showing the directions in which the cables extended, was not to be found in the station, but close to the shore we discovered a number of signboards bearing the inscription, "Cables." This, therefore, must be the place where we must search for the ends of the cable strands. Back and forth the steam launch carried us over the cables that were plainly to be seen in the clear water as we tried to grasp them with a couple of drags and heavy dredging hooks, which we drew along the bottom. It was no light task, for the cables were very heavy, and the only power at our command was a very limited amount of human strength. For a while, it seemed impossible to draw the cables to the surface; in the end, after we had suc-

ceeded in raising the bight of the cable a little, my men had to get into the water, dive, and tie tackle to it, by the aid of which we continued our labor. With great difficulty we at length succeeded in getting the cable strands into the boat. I did not want to use any of the dynamite cartridges for the work of destruction, as the "Emden" might have need of them for the sinking of more steamers. So we set to work upon the stout cables with crowbars, axes, driving chisels, and other like implements. After long and weary labor, we succeeded in cutting through two of them, and we then dragged the ends out to sea, and dropped them there. The third cable was not to be found in spite of our diligent search for it.

A small house of corrugated iron, in which were stored quantities of reserve apparatus and all sorts of duplicate parts, was blown up and set on fire with a couple of explosive cartridges. All newspapers, books, Morse tapes, and the like, we took away with us.

Our landing squad was just about to reëmbark when, from the "Emden," came the signal "Hurry your work." I quickly summoned my men, abandoned my intention of blowing up the small white schooner as a matter of little importance, and was on the point of pushing off from shore, when it was reported to me: "The 'Emden' has just sounded her siren." This was the command to return to the ship with the utmost despatch. As I was boarding the steam launch, I saw that the anchor flag of the "Emden" was flying at half mast, which told us that she was weighing anchor. The reason for this great haste was a mystery to me, and, for the present, was no concern of mine. All my effort was bent upon getting back to the ship as speedily as possible. With all steam on we raced toward the "Emden," taking the shortest course between the reefs.

Meanwhile, the "Emden" had turned seaward, and was running at high speed out of the harbor. My first thought was that she

was going to meet our tender, the "Buresk," that had been ordered here with coal, and which, I supposed, she was going to pilot through the reefs. In this belief I continued to follow the "Emden" as fast as I could, but was surprised to find her going at a speed of from sixteen to seventeen miles. Our launch, with the heavily laden cutters in tow, could make barely four miles an hour.

Suddenly we saw the battle flags on the "Emden" run up, and then a broadside burst from her starboard. Even yet the reason for all this was hidden from me, and I believed the "Emden" to be in pursuit of a steamer that had come in view.

But now a salvo of five heavy shells struck the water just aft of the "Emden"; five tall water-spouts marked the places where they fell into the sea. There was no longer any room for doubt; we knew that a battle was on in earnest. The "Emden's" opponent we could not see, for the island, with its tall palms, was between us. The

"Emden," in the meantime, had increased her distance from us to several thousand meters, and was adding to her speed with every moment. All hope of overtaking her had therefore to be abandoned, and I turned back.

Chapter II

THE "AYESHA"

We landed at the same place at which we had gone ashore before. Again I ordered all the Englishmen to assemble, and their firearms were taken from them. The German flag was raised on the island, which was declared to be under martial law; every attempt to communicate by signal with any other island, or with the enemy's ships, was forbidden; my officers were given orders to clear the beach for defence, to mount the machine guns, and to prepare to intrench. Should the engagement between the two ships prove to be a short one, I could count with certainty upon the enemy's cruiser running into port here, if for no other reason than to look after the station. It was not my intention, however, to surrender without a blow an island on which the German flag was flying.

The Englishmen on the island were little pleased at the prospect, and begged permission, in case it should come to a battle, to withdraw to one of the other islands. Their request was granted.

Accompanied by two of my signal men, I now took my station on the roof of the highest house to watch the fight between the two cruisers. As a whole, the Englishmen showed little interest in the conflict that was going on but a few thousand meters distant from the island. Other matters seemed to claim their attention. With an ingratiating smile one of them stepped up to our officers, who were head over ears in work down on the beach, and asked:

"Do you play tennis?"

It was an invitation which, under the circumstances, we felt compelled to decline.

By the time I had reached the roof, the fight between the "Emden" and the other cruiser was well under way. I could not identify the enemy's ship, but, judging from her structure,

and the amount of water raised by the falling shells, I concluded that it must be one of the two Australian cruisers, the "Sydney" or the "Melbourne." As the columns of water raised by the enemy's shells were much taller than those caused by the "Emden's," I estimated the guns of the enemy to be of 15 centimeter caliber.

The "Sydney," for she it was, as I learned later, was more than a match for the "Emden." Our ship of 3600 tons displacement could deliver a broadside of only five 10½ centimeter guns, and had no side armor, whereas the "Sydney," being a vessel of 5700 tons displacement, could fire a broadside of five 15.2 centimeter guns, and had armored sides. From the very beginning, the "Emden's" fire reached its mark on the enemy's cruiser, whose guns, it must be said, were aimed pretty badly. The water spouts that were raised by their falling shells were mostly several hundred meters distant from one another. But when one of the

volleys did hit, it made havoc on our unarmored vessel.

During the very first of the fight, the forward smoke stack of the "Emden" was shot away and lay directly across the deck. Another shell crashed into the stern aft of the cabin, and started a great blaze, the gray smoke of which was mixed with white steam, showing that the steam pipes had been damaged. The "Emden" now turned sharply about and made a dash for her foe, apparently for the purpose of making a torpedo attack. It cost her her foremast, which was shot away and fell overboard. For the moment it seemed as though the enemy's ship intended to discontinue the fight, for she turned and ran at high speed, followed by the "Emden." Whether the "Sydney" had suffered serious damage which could not be discerned from without, I could not tell. Perhaps it was simply her intention to increase her fighting distance from the "Emden," in order to take advantage of the greater caliber of her guns.

The running fight between the two ships now took a northerly course at an ever increasing distance from the island, and soon the two cruisers, still fighting, were lost to view beyond the horizon.

The point for me to settle now was what to do with the landing squad. So far as our ship was concerned, the damage she had suffered at the hands of a far superior foe was so great that a return to the island, even in the event of a most favorable outcome of the battle, was out of the question. She must run for the nearest port where she could make repairs, bury her dead, and leave her wounded. At the same time I could count with certainty upon the arrival of an English war vessel ere long in Keeling harbor, to learn what had befallen the cable and wireless station. For, had not the telegraphic service to Australia, Batavia and Mauritius been cut off entirely?

With our four machine guns and twenty-nine rifles we could, for the time at least, have

THE "AYESHA"

prevented the English from making a landing on the island, but against the fire of the English cruiser's heavy guns, which would then have been directed against us, we would have had no defence whatever. Taking everything into consideration, therefore, we could do no more than defer the surrender of a position that, from the outset, it had been impossible to hold. Moreover, confinement in an English prison was little to our taste.

Now, fortunately for us, the small white schooner that we had failed to blow up was still riding at anchor in the harbor. It could, and it should help us to escape from our predicament. I decided to leave the island on the little boat. Her name was "Ayesha," [1] and at one time she had served to carry copra from Keeling to Batavia two or three times a year, and to bring provisions back with her on her return trip. Now that steamship service had

[1] "Ayesha" is not an English but an Arabic name, and is pronounced Â-ee-sha. Âyesha is the name of the favorite wife of the Prophet Mohammet.

been established between these two points, she lay idle and dismantled in the harbor, and was gradually falling into decay.

Taking no one with me, I got into the steam launch and went out to the schooner to learn whether she was at all seaworthy. The captain and a single sailor were aboard her. Of the former I inquired casually whether he had any ammunition aboard, for I did not wish him to suspect the real purpose of my coming. He said there was none, and a brief inspection of the ship led me to believe that she was still seaworthy. Consequently I sent my officers and men aboard the "Ayesha" to get her into trim for sailing.

There was plenty to do on the little ship. All the sails and rigging had been taken down and stowed away, and had now to be put in place again.

When the Englishmen on the island realized that it was my intention to sail off in the schooner, they warned me with great earnest-

ness against trusting ourselves to her, saying that the "Ayesha" was old and rotten, and could not stand a sea voyage. Furthermore, they informed me that an English man-of-war, the "Minotaur," and a Japanese cruiser were in the vicinity of the island, and that we would surely fall a prey to one of them.

As my predecessor in command of the "Ayesha" was leaving her, he wished us God-speed, and concluded with the comforting remark, "But the ship's bottom is worn through."

When, in spite of all these warnings, we remained firm in our purpose, and continued the work of getting the "Ayesha" ready for sea, the sporting side of the situation began to appeal to the Englishmen, and they almost ran their legs off in their eagerness to help us. Could it have been gratitude that impelled them to lend us their aid? It is a question I have never been able to answer to my satisfaction, although, to be sure, several of them *did* express a feeling of relief at the thought

that now the fatiguing telegraph service with its many hours of overwork, and its lack of diversion, was a thing of the past. They showed us where the provisions and water were kept, and urgently advised us to take provisions from the one side, where they were new and fresh, rather than from the other, where they were stale. They fetched out cooking utensils, water, barrels of petroleum, old clothes, blankets, and the like, and themselves loaded them on trucks and brought them to us. From every side invitations to dinner poured down upon us; my men were supplied with pipes and tobacco; in short, the Englishmen did all they could to help us out.

Nor were they sparing with advice as to the course we ought to take, and time proved that all they told us of wind and weather, of currents, etc., was in every way trustworthy. As the last of our boats left the shore, the Englishmen gave us three hearty cheers, wished us a safe journey, and expressed their gratitude for

the "moderation" which we had shown in the discharge of our duty, wherein all of our men had behaved "generously," they said. Then, cameras in hand, they still swarmed about the "Ayesha," taking pictures of her.

Meanwhile the lookout on our ship reported that the two battling cruisers had come into sight again. From the top of the "Ayesha's" mast I could at first see only the thick cloud of black smoke that the "Sydney's" smoke stack was belching forth, but soon the masts, smoke stacks and upper deck came in sight. Of the "Emden" I could see only one smoke stack and one mast; the rest of the ship was below the horizon. Both cruisers were steering an easterly course, and both were still firing their guns.

Suddenly, at full speed, the "Sydney" made a dash at the "Emden." "Now," thought I, "the 'Emden's' last gun has been silenced, and the 'Sydney' is running at her to deal her her death blow." But then, in the black smoke of

the English ship, between the foremast and the nearest smoke stack, a tall column of water shot up, which could only be the result of a serious explosion. We supposed that it was caused by a well-aimed torpedo shot from the "Emden." The "Sydney," which was still running at a speed of twenty nautical miles, now made a quick turn to starboard, changed her course entirely, and steamed slowly westward. The "Emden" continued to steer an easterly course. Both ships were still firing at each other, but the distance between them grew greater and greater, until finally they were beyond the reach of each other's guns. The fight was over. In the approaching darkness both vessels were soon lost to sight beyond the horizon. That was the last we saw of them. The conflict, which had begun at about 8.30 in the morning, ended at six o'clock in the evening. The report, published in all the English newspapers, that it was only a "sixty minutes' running fight" is therefore to be classed with the

many similarly false reports made by the English.

The oncoming darkness now warned me to make my way as speedily as possible out of the harbor, for the dangers of the coral reefs render it unsafe for navigation after nightfall. In the meantime we had taken aboard water enough for four weeks, and provisions for eight. The sails had been bent on as best they could be. I made a short speech, and with three cheers for the Emperor, first in command, the war flag and pennant fluttered up to the masthead of his Majesty's latest ship, the schooner "Ayesha." Slowly the steam launch took us in tow. I climbed to the top of the foremast, as from there I could best discern where lay the reefs and the shoals, for of charts we had none. With the boatswain's whistle I gave the launch orders to steer to starboard or to port, according to the lay of the reefs. The "Emden's" two cutters we carried in tow.

Our departure was much too slow to suit us.

The sun was setting, and in these latitudes, so near the equator, there is no twilight. No sooner has the sun disappeared below the horizon than the blackness of midnight reigns. We had not passed quite through the danger zone of the reefs before it grew so dark that, from my position on the foremast, I could not see ahead sufficiently far to direct our course. In order to be able to see anything at all, I climbed down into the port fore channels close by the water, and gave my orders from there.

Just as we were passing the last reef that might prove dangerous to us, we spent some anxious moments. Suddenly, in spite of the darkness, I could see every pebble, every bit of seaweed on the bottom, an unmistakable evidence that we were in very shallow water. Our lucky star guided us over this shoal also, however, and we did not run aground.

Meanwhile we had set some sail, and had thus lightened the work of the steam launch, which still had us in tow. Before long we were

free of the sheltering islands, and the long, heavy swells of the ocean put some motion into our new ship.

When we were far enough out at sea to sail our boat without danger of running into the surf to leeward, I called the steam launch back to the ship, so as to take off the crew. The heavy swell made this manœuvre no light task. Again and again the little steamboat was dashed against the side of the "Ayesha," and, although the future of the launch was of little interest to me, this unexpected encounter between my old ship and my new one gave me serious concern. I had no confidence in the "Ayesha's" ability to endure with safety such vigorous demonstrations of friendship. Finally, however, we succeeded in ridding ourselves of the steam launch in this way: the last man aboard her started her engine again with the little steam that was left in the boiler. Then, from aboard the "Ayesha," we reached over with a boat hook, and turned the rudder of the

steam launch to port. Courtesying elegantly, the little boat drew away from us, and soon vanished in the darkness. Whither it went, I do not know. In all likelihood it found a grave in the surf that beat wildly only a few hundred meters away. Perhaps, however, it is still beating about the ocean, raiding on its own account.

Chapter III

ON BOARD

On the following day we undertook a closer inspection of our new abiding place. The "Ayesha" was a ship of 97 tonnage, as we learned from an inscription on one of the beams in the hold. Her length was about thirty meters, and her width somewhere between seven or eight. She was rigged with three masts. Of these, the after two, the mainmast and the mizzenmast, carried only fore and aft sails, whereas the foremast had two square sails. The ship was originally intended to be manned by a crew of five, besides the captain. There were now fifty of us aboard her. Provision for berthing the crew had been made in a special crew's cabin in the extreme forward part of the ship. But here there was room for only six men at the most; the rest of my crew had to sleep in the hold.

When we took possession of the "Ayesha" there was no cargo aboard her — nothing but iron ballast in the hold. Luxurious couches my men surely did not have, for we had brought with us from Keeling but few blankets and mattresses. For the time being, the men slept in a spare sail spread over the iron ballast. In time, however, they would be able to better their condition considerably. They therefore went busily to work at making hammocks out of old ropes which they untwisted, out of twine, and out of old sail cloth torn into strips, and other like material. These hammocks were swung wherever a place could be found for them, and afforded the occupants relief from the rather violent motion of the ship.

Below deck, aft of the hold, were two small cabins originally fitted out for sleeping rooms, but in which we were compelled to store our provisions. Moreover, swarms of huge cockroaches made them impossible as living rooms. In the extreme after part of the ship was another

small cabin, designated by a sign over the door as navigation room. In it the petty officers were quartered.

On deck was a little deck house. This was divided into two cabins, with a bed in each. One of them I occupied myself; the other was shared by my two lieutenants. Adjoining these cabins was another tiny one, furnished with a table and a few small benches. This served us as mess, as navigation, smoking and wine room, as saloon and for occupation by the officer whose watch it happened to be.

Our commissary department was carried on under many difficulties. To be sure, the canned provisions that we had taken with us from Keeling were of an excellent quality, but the caboose, that is, the ship's kitchen, was, of course, planned for cooking to be done for only five men, and the Lilliputian hearth was in no way sufficient for our needs. Nor could the fresh water we had with us be used for cooking, as the supply was sufficient only for drinking

purposes. To enlarge our cooking facilities we brought pieces of iron ballast from the hold, and with this and some strips of tin torn from places in the ship where it was not absolutely necessary, we fashioned a fireproof hearth, and in this improvised fireplace we kindled an open fire. Around it, in a circle, sat the men holding the cooking pots on rods over the fire, until the food was cooked. To set the cooking utensils on the fire and leave them there was quite impossible, as the rolling motion of the ship would soon have dislodged them.

All our cooking was done with salt water. What each day's bill of fare was to be, we left to the decision of the cook. We did not fare poorly on the "Ayesha" by any means. For the most part our meals consisted of rice cooked with fruit, smoked sausage, corned beef, or the like.

The drinking problem was a more difficult one. Aboard our little ship we had found four small iron water tanks in which a supply of

fresh water sufficient for a crew of five could easily be carried. These tanks we had not had time to examine while getting the "Ayesha" ready for sea. We had been obliged to fill them as quickly as possible. Now, with the small crew, only one tank had been used, and after a few days we discovered that the other three had become foul. The water we had put into them was therefore unfit to drink. The supply of bottled Seltzer water which I had put aboard at Keeling, I felt must not be used except in case of extreme emergency, for I had to reckon with the possibility that the "Ayesha" might prove unseaworthy, and that we would have to abandon her, and take to the "Emden's" two cutters, that we had aboard. In that case, the bottled water would be all that we could take with us.

We hoped to be able in a reasonably short time to replenish our water supply by refilling with rain-water the three tanks in which the water had fouled. In this hope we were not

disappointed. On the thirteenth of November, only four days after our departure from Keeling, the first of the usual tropical rains set in. Our bad tanks had been cleaned in the meantime, and an old sail got ready to catch the rain. It was stretched horizontally across the main hatch. In the middle of the sail was a hole, and directly under this hole a man was stationed with a petroleum can, the kind in which the Standard Oil Company delivers petroleum, and into which the rain-water ran. When it was full, it was passed from hand to hand along a line of men until it reached the tank into which it was to be emptied. In addition to this, the cabin roof was arranged to catch rain-water. Along the edges of the roof we fastened strips of moulding, and the water which collected on the roof was conducted through two gutters into petroleum cans hung where they emptied. This rain-water was not only fit to drink, but was rendered quite palatable by the addition of a dash of lime juice, of which we had fortu-

nately found a few bottles among the provisions of the former captain.

As, from this time forth, the tropical downpours set in with pleasing regularity, every morning and every evening, our tanks were soon full. In addition to these, all the available utensils and petroleum cans were filled with water. These rainfalls were very welcome for other reasons also. Since all the fresh water had to be reserved for drinking purposes, our prospects for washing seemed rather dubious. Soap will not dissolve in salt water, and to wash with salt water alone is not cleansing. We therefore utilized these tropical downpours to wash ourselves, and as shower baths, our necessity resulting in the invention of a new sort of bath, — a swinging bath. To prevent the rain-water from running off the deck, we stopped up the drain holes, the so-called scuppers, with old rags. With the rolling motion of the ship, the water which had thus been collected on the deck ran from one side to the

other, and so gave us a most excellent opportunity for a bath, while the descending rain answered for a final shower.

Moreover, the "Ayesha" carried two small jolly-boats, the one barely large enough to hold two, the other to hold three men. These boats hung on the davits near the deck house. They also were now used to collect water by closing the drain holes with the plugs provided for that purpose. Although we were disappointed to find that the water contained in them was somewhat salty, and therefore unfit to drink, it nevertheless served us very well for washing purposes.

For the ship's service the crew was divided into two watches, a starboard and a port watch. Most of my men were, of course, wholly unused to life on a sailing vessel, and the handling of the gear was entirely new to them. This was particularly the case with the stokers, who, naturally enough, had never seen service on a sailing vessel. Still, there were among the crew

a sufficient number of fishermen and seamen who at some former time had served on sailing vessels, to make it possible for me to handle the ship with safety. Whenever there was a job to be done that required great physical strength, every man aboard was available as so much man power.

At first the gear gave us much trouble. Most of the sails were old and rotten, and tore at the slightest provocation, so that we were constantly at work mending and patching the canvas. The tackle also gave way frequently. We were therefore obliged to exercise the greatest care during a squall, as we never knew just how much the masts could bear.

The condition of the ship itself was not such as to inspire one with any great degree of confidence. The captain's opinion, expressed in the words, "The bottom is worn through," as he left the ship, seemed to be well founded. When we went down into the hold and cautiously scraped away at the planking, we dis-

covered that the wood was red and rotten, so much so, indeed, that we quickly stopped our scratching, as we had no desire to poke the point of our knife into the Indian Ocean.

During the first days out we had a heavy swell astern, and the "Emden's" two cutters performed some wonderful dancing at the ends of the long ropes by which we carried them in tow. In one of its wild gyrations one of the cutters took a notion to catch on to the ship, just under the overhanging stern. Usually such set-to's between a ship and its jolly-boat end to the decided disadvantage of the latter, but in this case the conditions were reversed. With a sharp plunge the nose of the boat buried itself in the rotten wood of the stern, and broke a plank above the water line. I had little desire for a repetition of this performance. We therefore set the ill-mannered cutter adrift, and so had but one left, which, for a while, behaved very well. But this proper behavior was not of long duration, for, seized by an overweening

desire for its fellow, no doubt, the remaining cutter departed one night, and carried with it a large piece of the bulwarks to which it had been fastened. And again the break in the ship showed red and rotten wood.

In those first days, the "Ayesha" also leaked badly. In a short time we had so much water in the ship, that it rose to the height of the iron ballast on which the men slept. When we tried to work the ship's pump, we found that it was out of order. The packing of the pistons was gone. So we took the pump to pieces, got the piston out, replaced the missing rubber packing with rags soaked in oil, and finally succeeded in pumping the ship dry. Taking it all in all, the "Ayesha" cut a pretty sorry figure as a ship.

Had we had visitors at this period of our sea voyage, they would have been amazed at the resemblance our costumes bore to those in vogue in the Garden of Eden, for even aside from the times when we took our tropical

shower baths — then we wore nothing at all — our clothing was very scant. For the landing at Keeling we had not only clothed ourselves as lightly as possible, but I had given the men orders to wear their oldest clothing. Now, with the continuous handling of the sails, and the other strenuous work aboard the ship, our wearing apparel was fast disappearing. Having neither needles nor thread, we could not even mend it. To be sure, we had some garments that had been given us at Keeling, but these served rather as a source of amusement than as clothing. I had always had the impression that Englishmen generally are tall and spare. Whether those at Keeling were an exception, or what the reason was, I cannot say, but certain it is that most of their trousers reached only to a little below the knees of my men, and their jackets and blouses were big enough for two.

Chapter IV

A FINE DAY ON BOARD

Our men rose with the sun, at six o'clock in the morning. On war vessels it is the custom to rouse the crew by a call of three long trills given by all the petty officers at the same time on boatswains' whistles. At this signal the men turn out and lash their hammocks. We gave up the attempt to conform to this custom, as the noise that our one boatswain's whistle could make would hardly have been loud enough to attract the attention of waking men. The crew slept side by side, packed like herrings in a box, and all that was needed to waken the men, was to rouse the first one, who, in rising, could not fail to waken his nearest neighbor, who, in turn, would waken the next, and so on, until the last one was up.

After we were up, the next thing to be done

was to wash, provided there was water enough left in the jolly-boats from the night before. If it so happened that we could not get a wash, we accepted the situation with a cheerful spirit, as being quite in harmony with the total absence of toothbrushes aboard the ship. But our hair demanded special attention, for it was growing longer and longer with every day. The only comb that we possessed was passed from hand to hand, each man's neighbor serving him as looking glass, while for hair tonic we had most excellent salt water. There was even a shaving apparatus for the dandies, the rusty condition of the razor, however, making it necessary to use considerable caution.

Then came the cleaning of the ship. Water was hauled up in pails from over the sides of the vessel, and dashed over the deck. A part of the crew set to work at the pumps to rid the ship of the water that had leaked in over night. The sailors were up in the shrouds, looking after the latest damage that had been

sustained there, and making repairs. The cook, in the company of his own chosen helpers, was forward by the caboose, busy with getting breakfast, for which, besides rice, we also had coffee and tea. When this was over, there was really nothing more for the men to do. No drilling could be attempted, for lack of room. So we filled in the time occasionally by initiating the stokers, and others unused to life on a sailing vessel, into the mysteries of steering, of the compass, and of service in the rigging. At other times the one chart of which the ship could boast was fetched out, and the men were shown just where the ship lay. Many an idle hour was spent in making plans for our future.

As for charts, besides special maps of Batavia, where we had no intention of going, there was only the one large map that has been mentioned, which represented the half of the globe, and accordingly was on a very small scale. It began with Hong Kong and Borneo on the east, and ended with Suez, Zanzibar, and

Mozambique on the west. The long distance, about 700 nautical miles, to Padang, the port to which I intended to go, was represented on the chart by a space of no more than a hand's breadth.

Meanwhile the dinner hour had arrived. As there were not enough plates, forks, etc., to go round, we ate in relays. Each man's portion was dished out by the cook under supervision of one of the petty officers of the commissary department. With the dinner, a cup of coffee or tea was also served. To while away the long afternoon, we prolonged the meal as much as possible, and, when it was over, usually indulged in an afternoon nap. The separation of officers and crew, as is customary on board ship, was, of course, out of the question with us. The deck space was but just large enough to accommodate all the men with some degree of comfort on the upper deck.

Soon little groups had formed among the men, the members of which gathered each afternoon

at some favorite spot. There they would sit or lounge, smoking or sleeping, or happy if it was their turn to have the use of one of the few packs of cards that we had been able to secure before we left Keeling. Some of our men were devoted fishermen. Over the bulwarks, at every available spot, hung the fish lines in waiting for an unwary fish, but I cannot remember that I ever heard of one being caught. Can it be possible that this is to be ascribed to a dislike for rice on the part of the fish? For rice was our only bait. Reminiscences were exchanged, and rebuses, arithmetic questions, conundrums, and the like, went the rounds.

In the evening, after supper was over and the sun was setting, the men usually assembled forward on the deck, and sang. As there were a number of good voices among them, their singing in chorus was very pleasing, and, as usual when Germans are having a good time, the "Loreley" and other like tragic songs were

those that were oftenest sung. But "Puppchen" and the "Song of the Reeperbahn" were not neglected.

No particular hour was set for turning in. Everyone lay down to sleep when it suited him best, and the watches, that is, the forward lookout, and the man at the wheel, themselves saw to it that they were relieved at the right time. We carried no lights at night. We had but little petroleum aboard, and the two oil lamps that we had, gave out more smoke than light.

Chapter V

AN UNEASY DAY

Not always, however, did the days pass as uneventfully as the one just described. Often we had to struggle against high gales and thundergusts. In fact, they had to be reckoned with both morning and evening of every day. As welcome as the thunderstorms were for the supply of fresh water they brought us, we yet looked forward to them with dread also, because of the strain on ship and rigging. In the tropics the coming of a thunderstorm can be seen from afar, and the time of its arrival quite accurately timed.

The approach of one of these storms was usually heralded by a few dark clouds near the horizon, the falling rain showing as a long, broad streak reaching from sky to ocean. As the clouds rose toward the zenith, the columns

of rain came visibly nearer. When the storm was within a thousand meters of us, the sails were furled as far as necessary, and we rode out the gale. We "laid to" then, with close reefed sails, the ship's head close to the wind, until the gale, which was always accompanied by a downpour of rain so heavy that we could see nothing except what was immediately in front of us, was over.

One day we had an especially heavy thunderstorm. The clouds hung so low that it seemed as though we could grasp them with our hands. The wind set in more quickly than we had expected, and just as we had begun to shorten our light sails, the tempest was upon us. It seized the mizzen-topsail, and whipped it furiously through the air. The men on deck could not hold it against the strain, it flew over the mizzengaff, caught fast on it, and hung there. To secure it at the time was impossible, because of the heavy rolling of the ship. For a while, the flapping of the sail endangered the

whole mizzen-topmast, but more especially the slender upper part of the mast, which is always only lightly stayed. Its violent motion filled us with anxiety. Moreover, we were now in the worst of the gale, and had all we could do to attend to the other sails. Nevertheless, we finally succeeded in furling all the sails with the exception of a few bits of canvas that had to be left out to give the ship steerage way.

The clouds were so heavy that it was almost as dark as night. Unceasingly the lightning flashed about us, followed instantly by a heavy clap of thunder. So near and so vivid were the flashes of lightning, that they blinded us for the moment, and for seconds at a time we could see nothing at all. It was a genuine little cyclone that was sweeping over us.

Then the violent wind suddenly ceased as the center of the storm reached us, and the air about us grew absolutely still. The high seas and swells continued, however. The ship, suddenly robbed of its support by the almost

instant falling away of the wind, rolled so heavily from side to side, that we feared the masts would go overboard without our being able to do anything to prevent it. The atmosphere was filled with electricity; on each of our mast-heads burned St. Elmo fires, a foot high.

Slowly the thunderstorm passed over. After a few more brief but violent gusts of the recurring gale, the wind died down and blew more steadily and quietly. Soon nothing remained but a few distant flashes of lightning to remind us of the anxious hours we had but just passed. One after the other the sails were set, and we proceeded on our way. But soon afterward, the wind died away entirely.

The times when we were becalmed were perhaps even more unpleasant than when the wind paid us an over-amount of attention, for, with the high and never-ceasing ocean swells, our ship rolled very heavily whenever there was no breeze to drive her. Then the sails,

no longer filled by the wind, flapped from side to side, and when the heavy booms went over, the whole ship shivered, and the masts trembled. At such times we often thought it best to furl all sails, and so avoid any possible danger to ship and rigging.

On account of the violent and jerking motion of the ship on such days, life aboard her was extremely unpleasant and very fatiguing. To remain aboard the ship at all, we had to hold on to some support continuously with both hands, or else wedge ourselves firmly into a secure corner.

On this particular day, we were again obliged to furl all sails. While we were thus in the worst of the rolling, and were swearing vigorously at the ship's eccentricities, suddenly a cloud of smoke was reported in sight on the port bow forward. As we were wholly outside of any course ordinarily followed by steamers, we concluded that the vessel sighted must, like ourselves, have reason to avoid the usual routes

of steamship travel. At first we thought it might, perhaps, be one of our coaling ships, either the "Exford" or the "Buresk," which, just before the fight off Keeling, had been dismissed by the "Emden" to await her at certain designated points. Having neither heard nor seen anything of the "Emden," they might now be running into Padang, hoping there to learn what had happened. On the other hand, it might quite as well be a hostile cruiser that had run into Keeling after the fight, and, having heard of our departure, was now looking for us.

There were, in fact, but three courses for us to choose from while making our escape from Keeling, — to run to Padang, to Batavia, or to Africa. Of these the most probable ones were to Batavia, or to Padang. For a fast cruiser it would be an easy matter to search for us on both of these routes, and so make sure of finding us. Knowing that we were wholly dependent upon the wind for our prog-

ress, our pursuers could easily picture to themselves the course we had taken, and where they would most likely find us.

Naturally, we made every effort to discover the character of the unknown vessel. But even from the mast-heads we could see no more than the smoke she was leaving behind her. To elude her by changing our course was quite out of the question with the "Ayesha," becalmed as we were, and drifting idly. But, after giving us a few anxious hours, the smoke on the horizon vanished.

Meanwhile, the regular evening breeze had set in, and with it came the usual torrents of rain. We were now in the region where the Southeast and Northwest Monsoons meet and struggle for the mastery. The wind changed every few moments. First, a gust would strike the ship from forward, and the next minute it would be blowing a gale from aft, a condition of affairs that afforded opportunity for some expert and ingenious sailing manœuvres. After

we had practised close hauling the sails a number of times, we were suddenly confronted with a task that well nigh proved too much for us. A violent gust of wind from the northwest was sweeping down upon the ship from forward at the same time that one from the south was approaching from aft. We were therefore obliged to tack by close hauling the foresail, while, at the same time, the mainsail had to be set for wind from astern. The two shower baths that the two gusts brought us could not have been better managed in an up-to-date sanitarium, where alternating hot and cold showers are a feature of the baths. The gust from the northwest brought a torrent of rain so icy cold that most of us got below decks as fast as we could, whereas the one from the south, which overtook us a few minutes later, showered us with water that was more than lukewarm.

Chapter VI

PADANG

On the twenty-third of November, early in the morning, the ship was "cleared for action," for we were now getting near land, and it was not at all improbable that we would run across an English or Japanese torpedo boat destroyer coaling somewhere among the islands. For such an emergency my plans were made. I intended to tack ahead of the destroyer, which would certainly not be expecting an attack from us, to bring up alongside of it by an apparently unsuccessful manœuvre, and then to grapple with the enemy at close quarters. To make the best use of our armament we had cut four holes in the railing of the "Ayesha" where the machine guns could be placed to some advantage, although the rigging, with its lanyards and dead ends, would certainly

be a great hindrance. The rifles and pistols were taken up on deck, and the ammunition was set within easy reach. As the machine guns had not been used for some time, a shot was fired from each of them, to test them.

At ten o'clock in the morning the lookout at the mast-head reported: "Land in sight ahead." Just where we were, and what land we were approaching, it was quite impossible for us to know, with the limited means of navigation at our command. But to be near any land whatever was a source of satisfaction to us. Gradually, one island after another came in sight. By four o'clock in the afternoon we had got our bearings sufficiently to know that we were just outside of Seaflower Channel, and about eighty nautical miles from Padang.

Of Seaflower Channel we had no charts whatever; we only knew that it abounded in reefs. As a calm always set in towards evening, and I dared not venture to pass at night through this channel so unfamiliar to me, we lay to,

and slowly drifted seaward under reefed sails. Just before sunrise we turned about, and steered for the Channel again.

Lookouts were stationed in the masts to watch the water for the change in color that indicates the presence of reefs or shoals. With all sails set, and with a light wind in our favor, we passed through the Channel during the course of the day without meeting with any serious difficulties in the way of navigation.

As we no longer had any reason to fear a shortage in our fresh water supply before reaching Padang, the bottles of Seltzer water were brought out, and one was given to each man, as an especial treat, and probably afforded us more enjoyment than had a bottle of champagne under ordinary circumstances. On that evening, just before seven o'clock, our log registered the eight-hundredth mile.

Before the night was over, a final gale, with a rain like a veritable cloudburst, gave us considerable to do. As the day dawned, the

high mountains of Sumatra came in sight against the horizon. Unfortunately, the wind was not only very light, but off shore also, and we could make but little headway. The heat was so intense that towards noon a sail had to be spread for an awning.

Our supply of tobacco had given out entirely by this time. The men smoked tea leaves as a substitute. The officers tried it also, but — bah, the devil was welcome to it! The crew seemed to get considerable enjoyment out of it, however.

As a guide for the run into Padang, between all the many reefs and islands, we had drawn a chart for ourselves according to information gathered from an antiquated sailors' hand-book that some one had raked up. Although this chart could lay no claim to being either accurate or complete, it was nevertheless better than none. During the evening we saw, on one of the islands that we passed, a beacon which was wholly a surprise to us. Before the night

was over the long-looked-for flash-light of Padang came in sight, but we passed it at a great distance. Much to our regret, the current, instead of taking us toward land, was steadily carrying us farther out to sea, and, with the light breeze that was blowing, to tack was out of the question. By morning, therefore, we were five nautical miles farther off shore than we had been on the previous evening.

The strait in which we now were is the highway for all ships. We had little desire to remain here, if for no other reason than that we were very likely to encounter some hostile cruiser. By this time a complete calm had set in. We therefore lowered our two jolly-boats, the smaller one manned by one, the larger boat by two men, hitched them to our "Ayesha," and so attempted to make some headway. For the men at the oars, this was no light task, exposed as they were to the full rays of a tropical sun, as they sat unprotected from it in the open boats. We, on board, were not

idle either. The oars of the "Emden's" two cutters, which we had with us, were fetched out and tied together by pairs, so as to lengthen them, and with these we proceeded to row the "Ayesha." Although it cannot be said that we attained the speed of a fast mail steamer in this way, we did, however, make some progress.

On the following day a light wind did at last set in, and relieved us of this strenuous labor. In the distance, near the coast, we saw a number of steamers that were evidently either entering or leaving the port of Padang. One of these roused our interest more than any of the others, because she apparently did not change her position at all, and so was evidently laying to, as the great depth of water in this vicinity precludes the possibility of anchoring. As we drew near to the vessel, we could make out with some degree of certainty that she was not a merchantman. She appeared to be a small warship of some kind — a

gun-boat, or a torpedo-boat destroyer, and flew a flag which we could not distinguish, because of its great distance from us.

Suddenly, the ship that had been lying so motionless began to move. Thick clouds of smoke poured from the smokestacks; she turned sharply, headed for us, and approached at high speed. In a short time we recognised the war flag of the Netherlands flying at the mast-head. As we had no desire to drop our incognito as yet, and as we were sailing in free waters, there was no reason why we should show our colors. We therefore quickly gathered up all our rifles, and, together with our artillery equipment, stowed them away below decks. All the men quickly disappeared down the main hatchway, which was closed after them. The wildest looking one of the sailors and myself were the only ones who remained in sight. That we both belonged to the Imperial Navy no one would ever have imagined, as our clothing was so scant that we would much more readily have

been sized up as belonging to the war fleet of some one of the island kingdoms of the Pacific.

Before long, the torpedo-boat destroyer was close beside us, and began to evince an interest in us, which, inexplicable from the first, soon became extremely embarrassing. At a distance of fifty meters she slowly passed by. On the commander's bridge stood all the officers, each provided with marine glasses, through which they examined our ship with great curiosity. From the lively conversation that was going on between the officers, we concluded that they were talking about us. The destroyer passed around us, close under our stern, and all the binoculars were turned toward our ship's name, which had long since disappeared under a coat of the thickest white paint. We were just congratulating ourselves that we had bluffed her, when, at a distance of 5000 meters, she suddenly turned, and lay to. At this, I could not rid myself of the thought that we had been expected.

At the destroyer's approach we had got our war flag ready to run up, for if we had been spoken, we would, of course, have replied by a display of our colors.

In the course of the afternoon our attendant, whom by this time we had identified by the ship's name as the Dutch destroyer, "Lynx," left us, and disappeared in the direction of Padang. In our cheerful but overhasty conclusion that she was preceding us into port to give notice of our coming, so that maids of honor might be in waiting, and triumphal arches be prepared for us, we were doomed to disappointment, however.

By nightfall we lay close before the small, flat coral islands that lie in front of the entrance to the harbor. We could see the lights of a steamer that was coming out of the harbor. Another was moving into port. We looked upon both of them with suspicion, as we supposed one of them to be our companion of the foregoing afternoon. We therefore carefully

screened the "Ayesha's" lights. We had made no mistake, for in signaling to the incoming steamer, the outgoing ship revealed herself to be our old acquaintance, the "Lynx." To our regret, she had sighted us in spite of all the precaution we had taken. Again she became our close companion, and for a while her green and red side lights could be seen immediately astern, at a distance of not more than one hundred meters. We felt truly sorry for the "Lynx." It must have been very irritating to her to have to trundle behind us at the wonderful speed of one nautical mile, a speed which, with the light breeze blowing, the "Ayesha" could not exceed. The engineers at the 1000 horse-power engines of the "Lynx" probably wished us elsewhere more than once that night.

In so far as our problems of navigation were concerned, the presence of the "Lynx" was a distinct advantage to us, for we were sailing in waters with which we were wholly unac-

quainted, but we could feel perfectly sure that wherever the "Lynx" could float, we could also. We knew that if we were nearing a shoal, our escort would retreat in time, and we could then turn and follow her.

Otherwise, however, her companionship was little to our liking, for it gave us the appearance of a disreputable little vagabond being brought in by a burly policeman. As we were a warship, we had no intention of allowing ourselves to be thus escorted. I therefore determined to communicate with the "Lynx" by signal. For this purpose I had a white bull's eye lantern, that usually hung in the men's quarters, brought on deck. In front of this lantern we held a board, and by raising and lowering it, we gave our Morse signals. By means of this apparatus of high technical development, we conveyed to our escort the message in English, "Why are you following me?" Although the "Lynx" acknowledged our signal as having understood it, we received

no reply to our question. After a half hour had passed without an answer, we resorted to our Morse signal again, but this time asked in German, "Why do you follow me?" And again the signal was acknowledged, but no answer given. Shortly afterward, however, the "Lynx" increased her speed, and steamed off. For another whole day the poor "Lynx" had to dog our footsteps, for the wind continued to fail us.

When, on the following day, the "Ayesha" had carried us within the limits of Dutch territorial waters, we immediately ran up our war flag and pennants. The "Lynx" did not again draw near to us, but kept at a distance of several thousand meters.

Toward noon we found ourselves in a position of some peril. We were aware that we were now in a region of submerged reefs over which a vessel of even our light draught could not pass in safety, but of the exact location of these reefs we knew nothing. To our great

relief, a little Malay sailboat came alongside, and brought us a native pilot, whom I was glad to employ. The only prospect of remuneration that I could hold out to him was through our consul, as the entire amount of cash on board consisted of a shilling and twopence, which we had found in a pocket-book that the former captain had forgotten to take with him, and which we had confiscated for the benefit of the Imperial treasury. In marked contrast to the impression we made on the Dutch — as developed later — this Malay pilot, who seemed to us to be a very intelligent person, was from the outset untroubled by any doubt of our status as a German warship, for he at once declared himself willing to accept our promise of a later payment through the German consul.

Hardly had the pilot come alongside, when the "Lynx" made a dash for us at high speed. As we had no idea what her intentions were, I ordered the war flag, which had been lowered

in the meantime, to be run up again. In order to impress the "Lynx" more fully with the fact that she was dealing with an Imperial ship of war, I ordered the salute customary between warships to be given, as she sped past us at a distance of about sixty meters. Our entire crew stood at attention on deck, and our officers saluted. The "Lynx" at once returned our salute in like manner.

Just before running into the harbor, I flagged a signal to the "Lynx," saying, "I am sending a boat." Then I donned my full-dress uniform — my khaki brown landing suit from the "Emden," of which I had been most careful — and went on board the "Lynx."

Her commander received me at the gangway ladder, and escorted me to the messroom. I opened the conversation, saying that we had felt much flattered at the lively interest he had shown in us during the past day and a half, that we were a landing squad from the "Emden," and were on the way to Padang with

his Majesty's ship, "Ayesha," that at Padang we wished to repair damages, and relieve the distress on board by replenishing our store of provisions and our water supply. I then inquired whether he knew of any reason why we could not run into the harbor. To this the commander replied that he had orders to accompany us, that there was nothing to prevent us from running into the harbor, but that in all probability we would not be allowed to run out again; that these matters would, however, be decided by the civil authorities on shore, and that he could give us neither further, nor more definite, information.

I represented to him that the "Ayesha," being a warship, could leave the harbor at any time, and that no one had the right to detain us. Then I added in jest: "I hope you and I will not get into a fight when I run out."

As I left the destroyer, I saw the "Ayesha" for the first time from a distance, and under full sail. I must say that she made a capital

appearance, and looked very pretty, even though the patched and torn sails she carried were little in harmony with the pennant and war flag of the German Empire.

Just before we reached the entrance to the harbor, a small steam tug came out to meet us. It was bringing the harbor master, who was coming to show us where to drop anchor. He indicated a place quite far out. It was my intention, however, to get as close as possible to the steamships lying in the harbor, for even now I could distinguish the German and Austrian flags flying on some of them. I therefore told the harbor master that I would rather not anchor so far out, but would like to run farther into the harbor. It was not a sufficiently sheltered place for my ship, I explained, and furthermore, that it required a great length of chain to anchor in water of that depth. That our chains were in fact quite long enough to reach to the bottom of water six times as deep, I did not feel obliged to tell

him. By and by his objections were overcome by argument in plain German. But, as we got farther in, he demanded very insistently that we anchor at once. Now it chanced that by a mishap the two topsails, the very ones by which a ship makes the most headway, absolutely refused to come down. Again and again the sheets and halyards hitched, so that, as was my original intention, we had come close up to the steamers before we found it possible to anchor.

As soon as the "Ayesha" lay at anchor, I sent my senior officer, Lieutenant Schmidt, on shore to report our arrival officially, and to make my wishes known to the authorities. At the same time, the German consul was asked to come on board. Furthermore, I announced that, in accordance with international custom, no one would be allowed to come on board without the permission of the government authorities, nor would any one from the ship be permitted to go ashore.

Soon the "Ayesha" was surrounded by boats coming from the German ships. There were the "Kleist," the "Rheinland," and the "Choising" of the Lloyd line, besides an Austrian ship. They all had their top flags set, and greeted us with a "Hurrah." Cigars, cigarettes, tobacco, watches, clothing, poems, letters, and, what we wanted most of all, German newspapers, were thrown to us. That these were old, none later than the second of October, and it was now the twenty-seventh of November, mattered little. They were most welcome, for up to this time, the only news that we had obtained was from the English papers that we had found on board the English steamers that the "Emden" had raided. All that we had heard of the war, therefore, were the widely disseminated Reuter tales of horror such as: — The Russians near Berlin — the Kaiser wounded — the Crown Prince fallen — suicide epidemic among German generals — revolution in Germany — the last horse slaughtered — complete

rout on the western front, and the like. Together with the newspapers, many pictures had been thrown on board also, and, on coming into the cabin and mess soon afterward, I found the walls covered with pictures of the Kaiser, the chief of the fleet, the Secretary of State for the Imperial Navy, and others, which the men had tacked up for decoration.

At first the Dutch government authorities made trouble for us, as they were not disposed to accord us the status of a warship, but intended to regard us as a prize of war. Against this, I made an instant and vigorous protest by declaring that it was only to my superior officers in Germany that I would have to account for my right to command this ship. At the same time I asked permission to take aboard water, provisions, ropes, sailcloth, clothing, nautical charts, and the simplest toilet necessities, such as soap, tooth brushes, hair brushes, shoe polish, etc. The German consul took charge of this. The "neutrality officer," especially appointed by

the Dutch government to look after such matters, immediately wired to Batavia to get his orders concerning us direct from the authorities there. Altogether, the impression I received was that every effort was being made to hold the "Ayesha," and to intern the officers and crew. It was very evident that the local authorities were much disturbed, and feared complications with Japan or England, if we were allowed to leave.

The person most concerned, and the one with whom the decision lay, seemed to be the harbor master, a subaltern official, and a Belgian at that. When the afternoon had well nigh passed, and the things ordered for the ship had not arrived, I requested the senior Dutch commander at Padang to order the goods to be delivered at once, as, in conformity to the neutral code, I would have to run out of the harbor within twenty-four hours. Finally, at seven o'clock in the evening, a part of what had been ordered arrived, and with the

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things came the neutrality officer. He made every possible effort to induce me to allow officers and crew to be interned. As I had foreseen this, my officers had been asked to be present and take part in the conversation, so that he might be convinced from the beginning that the "Ayesha's" officers were unanimous in refusing to consider his proposition.

In the first place, the neutrality officer represented to me — in so far as I could see, by advice from Batavia — how wholly impossible it would be for us to get away, as it was forbidden to deliver either marine charts, or nautical books. There were many other things also with which we could not be supplied, such as clothing, for instance, since, to provide us with these, as well as with soap, tooth powder, etc., would be to "increase our war strength."

As it had now been three weeks since any of us had been able to brush our teeth, we decided that this hardship could be endured a little longer. Nor had the one comb we pos-

sessed failed to serve our modest demands. As the harbor master had seen that my men were going almost naked for want of clothing, and as he also was aware that we had no marine charts, I could but conclude that there was intention in refusing us these very necessary articles. When I persisted in my determination to sail with or without charts, I was told that we could not escape capture if we ran out, as the waters round about were being scoured by Japanese and English cruisers; that it had only been by a lucky chance that we had escaped capture so far, and that we would surely be caught if we put to sea again; that the "Emden" had acquitted herself well enough, and that no one would criticize us if this hopeless attempt were abandoned. It is needless to say that we absolutely refused to be moved by all this persuasion.

Meanwhile, the provisions had been delivered and stowed away on board, and the ship made ready to weigh anchor, the only hindrance to

our departure being the ten live pigs that we had taken with us, for they persisted in standing just where our anchor chain was being hove up. At eight o'clock in the evening we left our anchorage.

From the Dutch papers that we received a few weeks later, we learned that the people had occupied themselves with various speculations as to what we were going to do, and where we were bound. They might have spared themselves the trouble of these speculations if they had listened as we departed, for the answer to the question whither we were going and what were our intentions, was born back to them upon the breeze, as the "Ayesha" vanished into the night:

> "To the Rhine, the Rhine, the German Rhine,
> To guard its sacred boundary line!"

Chapter VII

THE MEETING WITH THE "CHOISING"

With a light wind astern, the "Ayesha" slowly made her way out from among the Dutch islands, and toward three o'clock in the morning had passed beyond the limits of Dutch territorial waters. I had but just turned in when Lieutenant Schmidt, whose watch it was, waked me with the words: "Captain, a German boat is coming alongside."

As I knew that we were then well out at sea, I growled out: "Man, don't talk nonsense! Let me sleep!"

But he assured me again that it was as he had said, and would not be frightened off even by the most violent protests. At the same time I heard loud voices from outside crying: "There she is, there she is! We have caught her after all."

As I came on deck, I saw a little rowboat with a few people in it swiftly approaching us from out the darkness of the lingering night. Soon one traveling case, and then another, came flying on board. Their two owners appeared immediately afterward, and turned out to be an officer of the reserves and a chief engineer's mate, also a reservist. Both reported to me for duty. As we were outside of the limit of Dutch territorial waters, there was no reason for deferring their enrollment.

Our only difficulty was to provide quarters for the officers now aboard the "Ayesha," as there was but the one bed, which was hardly big enough for three. In the end, it was arranged that one officer should sleep in the bunk in the cabin, while another chose the place on the floor under the mess table for his bed, a resting place which was not wholly free from disturbance, however, as the third officer, who had the watch, was inclined to put his feet there.

By evening, a moderate, favorable breeze had taken us as far as Seaflower Channel, with which we were well acquainted. To our surprise, we discovered a large steamer coming toward us on an easterly course. As there are no beacon lights on this strait, it is avoided by steamers, most merchantmen preferring to go by way of the more northerly route through Siberut Strait, where there are many lights. The appearance of a steamer in this unfrequented spot was, therefore, to say the least, rather remarkable. I strongly suspected it to be a warship.

As quickly as possible every sail, to the very last rag we had, was set, our course was changed hard to starboard, and, with all the speed we could muster, we tried to get back into Dutch waters. To our great relief, the low, palm-covered coral islands soon came into sight, easily distinguishable by the broad white line of the surf that always breaks on their shores. We crept as close as we dared to this line of

surf, keeping at a distance of about a thousand meters from the shore. To anchor in this depth of water was quite impossible, for these coral islands rise abruptly, almost perpendicularly, out of the water.

Our frame of mind was in no wise improved when suddenly our unknown steamer began to exchange flashlight signals in secret code with some other vessel as yet invisible to us. Soon afterward the second warship, for it could be no other kind of vessel, steamed away toward the south, while the other cruised back and forth through Seaflower Channel. Unfortunately the wind died down more and more, — so much so that our hope that by daylight we would be out of sight of the cruising steamer, was doomed to disappointment.

It was my intention now to run in between the many small islands, to tie the "Ayesha" fast to the first convenient palm tree, take down top-masts and sails, and so make it impossible to discover us from out at sea. Then I

meant to find out the nature of the ship in which we were so much interested. The calm which set in rendered it impossible to carry out this plan, however. At sunrise we were only a few nautical miles distant from the warship, and hardly had the daylight revealed to her the masts of the "Ayesha," when she changed her course and approached us at high speed. We were still within the limit of Dutch territorial waters, and I had not the least desire to leave them. Fortunately for us, the man-of-war turned out to be neither English nor Japanese. It was the Dutch flag-ship, "De Zeven Provincien." The iron-clad followed us, always at some distance, however, until we had left Dutch waters in our course westward.

We continued to sail toward the west, intending to keep the "Ayesha" within the vicinity of a certain point where we hoped to meet with some German steamer. Although it had not been possible for us to make any definite arrangements with any of the German

vessels that were lying at Padang, nevertheless, from the conversations that had taken place from deck to deck, their captains had some knowledge of the course we intended to follow. We took it for granted, therefore, that some one of these steamers would follow us with a view of aiding us on our farther journey. So we drifted about at sea for nearly three weeks. During a part of this time we had rough weather, which was especially trying to our ten pigs, for whom quarters had been put up in the bows near the capstan. To make life aboard the "Ayesha," when she was rolling heavily, at all endurable to these animals, we had nailed slats on the flooring of their quarters. Before this had been done, the poor creatures went sliding back and forth across the smooth deck, from rail to rail.

Twice our hope that a friendly steamer was coming to our relief was disappointed. Each time it was an English ship. One of them behaved so peculiarly, and made such unusual

manœuvres as we came in sight, that we believed her to be an auxiliary cruiser. We therefore cleared the "Ayesha's" deck for action. To occupy the attention of the cruiser, with whom we wished to pass for a harmless merchant vessel, we signaled: "Please give me the geographical position." This is a signal very commonly used by sailing vessels when meeting a steamer. The desired information was given us, but with it came the embarrassing question: "Who are you?" We had no special signal of our own, and the "Ayesha's" signal, which we had learned from the ship's papers, we did not, for obvious reasons, care to give. So we took four flags that happened to be at hand, arranged them one above the other, tied a knot in the two upper ones, so that no one could tell what they were, and then hoisted this signal in such a way that it was half hidden by the sails. This scheme we hoped would lead the steamer to believe that we had answered the question, but that she had failed to de-

cipher our signal. About half an hour later the steamer had disappeared. We saw her answering signal, "I have seen your signal, but cannot make it out," fluttering after her at half mast as long as she remained in sight. The second English steamer came in view at a great distance from us, and probably did not see us at all.

The fourteenth of December, 1914, was a thick, foggy and rainy day, with rather high seas running. The "Ayesha" was tacking back and forth under close reefed sails, when suddenly, through the dense atmosphere, we could see, only about four thousand meters ahead, a steamer looming up out of a thick, gray fog bank. She had two masts and one smoke stack, and was steering an easterly course. We were sailing toward the west. At this point the course of the ordinary merchantman can only be either to the north, or to the south. Hence, a steamer running on an easterly course here, must have some unusual reason for doing so. The natural infer-

ence was that this was one of the German steamers looking for us. We steered our course for her at once, under as much sail as our ship could carry. We sent off red and white fire balls that are visible by day as well as by night, in the hope of attracting the attention of the steamer, which by this time we had recognized as the Lloyd steamer, "Choising." Our great fear was that the "Choising" would fail to see us in the foggy weather, and so would pass us by. At last, after we had sent off our fourth or fifth fire ball signal, we saw the ship turn, and come towards us.

Up flew our flag and pennant. The steamer ran up the German flag. The crew laid aloft into the shrouds, and three cheers rang from deck to deck. As usual, our men were dressed in the manner customary in the Garden of Eden, a costume which necessity had forced upon them. The men of the "Choising" confided to us later that they were blank with astonishment when suddenly, out of the fog,

emerged a schooner, the shrouds of which were filled with naked forms. Because of the heavy seas running, an immediate transfer to the "Choising" was not possible. As better weather had prevailed in the region to the south, from which we had come, I signaled the "Choising" to follow the "Ayesha."

But, instead of growing better, the weather grew steadily worse on the following day, until, during the course of the night, it developed into a heavy storm. The "Ayesha's" sails were close reefed, and, it must be said, she behaved well. Not one of the heavy combers broke over her; she rode them like a duck. Of course, the inside of the ship was as wet as the outside, for the spray dashed over the deck without intermission.

At daybreak the "Choising," which is a ship of 1700 tonnage, signaled by flag: "On account of the storm and heavy seas I cannot remain here." I therefore decided to run in under the lee of the land, so as to make the transfer there,

and accordingly, signaled another place of meeting to the "Choising." The two ships separated again, as I, in my sailing vessel, could not steer the same course that the steamer took.

The next night was the worst that we experienced on the "Ayesha." All night long the tempest raged. Although aware of our proximity to the islands, we did not know just where we were. Both the wind and the current threatened to dash us against the reefs. The night was so black that we could not see anything. If, under these conditions, we should get too near the shore, both ship and crew were doomed. Even the small rags of sails, closely reefed as they were, which we still carried, were almost too much. Towards morning an especially fierce squall set in. It was too much for our rotten old sails. We heard a sharp crack, and then another, — our foresail and our staysail had torn away from their bolt ropes, and only a few small rags were left whipping in the wind. The departing foresail

took with it a third sail, the fore staysail, so that we lost all our forward canvas. To set a spare sail was quite impossible at the time, both on account of the darkness and of the heavy running seas. We had to lay to, therefore, with only the aftersails, and trust to luck to keep away from the surf.

As soon as the day dawned, the spare sails were got out and bent on. Before long, the wind began to die down. We found it possible to increase our canvas and steer toward the place appointed for our meeting with the "Choising." As we drew near to it, at about nine o'clock in the morning, the "Choising" appeared in the distance. In the meantime, however, the wind had fallen off so completely that the "Ayesha" could hardly make any headway at all. I therefore signaled the "Choising" to take us in tow, and get in the lee of the nearest island. There we would find shelter from both wind and waves, and the transfer could be safely made.

Chapter VIII

THE PASSING OF THE "AYESHA"

While we were being towed by the "Choising," we began to unrig the good old "Ayesha." It saddened us to think that we would have to sink her, as there was no port to which we could take her. There was danger that she would be restored to her former owner if we took her to a Dutch port. This we wanted to prevent under any circumstances. All the provisions we still had on hand were placed on the upper deck, and our arms were taken there also. Trunks there were none to pack. The "Ayesha's" figure-head, which represented the favorite wife of the prophet, was taken down, and the rudder wheel unscrewed; both were to be carried with us aboard the "Choising," and kept as souvenirs.

Soon we had reached the shelter of the small islands, the swell ceased, and it was possible

to bring the "Ayesha" alongside the steamer. Meanwhile, the "Ayesha's" shrouds, the ropes which hold the masts, were cut, and all other ends and stays were either removed, or cut through. At the same time two holes were bored into the hold, and through these the ship began slowly to fill.

Towards four o'clock in the afternoon the "Choising's" engine was started up, and the "Ayesha" was cut adrift. It appeared as though the little ship were loth to part from us, for, although our steamer was moving on, and no hawser was holding the "Ayesha" to us, she kept alongside the "Choising" for some time. And then, at last, as though she had found her own strength insufficient to keep up with us, the "Ayesha" caught on to our ship, just behind the gangway ladder, carrying a part of it with her.

I wanted to stay by the "Ayesha" as long as she was afloat, so our steamer was stopped, and we lay to at a distance of three hundred to

four hundred meters off from her. The loss of the brave little ship touched us deeply. Although our life on board had been anything but comfortable, we nevertheless all realized fully that it was to the "Ayesha" we owed our liberty. For nearly a month and a half she had been our home. In that time she had carried us 1709 nautical miles. We all stood aft at the stern railing of the "Choising," and watched the "Ayesha's" last battle with the waves. Gradually, and very slowly, she sank lower and lower in the water. Soon it washed her upper deck. Then suddenly a shudder passed over the whole ship; she seemed to draw a long breath; the bow rose out of the water for a last time, only to plunge into it again the more deeply. The iron ballast rolled forward; standing on end, her rudder up, her masts flat on the water, the "Ayesha" shot like a stone into the deep, never to be seen again. Three cheers for her rang out above her ocean grave.

The day was the sixteenth of December, 1914, and the hour, fifty-eight minutes after four o'clock in the afternoon.

Aboard the "Choising," the first thing to be done was to order a course to the west, and the next, to see what provision could be made for my men. A place had already been prepared for them in a part of the ship ordinarily used for the storing of coal. It had been cleaned up, and mattresses, blankets, etc., sufficient for all, were in readiness, so that, in comparison with the days spent on the "Ayesha," a life of luxury was before us.

An ocean greyhound my new ship surely was not. When in the best of trim, she went at the rate of seven and one half miles, but there were times when we had to content ourselves with four. This was due, in part, to poor coal. The "Choising" was a ship that had originally been intended for use as a coaling steamer for the "Emden," and in this capacity had waited long for her at the

appointed place. But, as the British Admiralty had been so obliging as to provide the "Emden" most generously and considerately with the best of Welsh coal, although its intended destination was Hong Kong, there had been no reason why the "Emden" should take on any of the poor quality of coal from India and Australia, which the "Choising" had aboard for her. While waiting for the "Emden" the "Choising's" cargo of coal had got on fire, and we were now using what was left of this half-burned coal.

On the "Choising" we had news which was of importance to us. At the time that we left Padang in the "Ayesha," we found it a most difficult problem to decide where to go. My earliest plan, to try to reach Tsing-tao, had to be abandoned when, at Padang, we learned of the fall of that colony. My next intention was to join his Majesty's ship "Königsberg," of whose whereabouts we knew nothing more than that she was somewhere in the Indian

Ocean. In case she was no longer there (I had hoped to get news of her from the "Choising"), my next plan was to sail to German East Africa. We knew that there had been some severe fighting there between our colonial troops and the English, and, upon reflection, I abandoned this project also, as being an absolutely hopeless one. With only fifty men, whose clothing outfit was an entirely inadequate one, and who were wholly unprovided with any of the many things necessary to troops on land, with neither surgeon nor medicines, no knowledge of the language, no guide, and no maps, it would be next to impossible, in a district as large as the fighting area of Southeast Africa, to locate and make connection with troops numbering not more than a few thousands themselves. For the present, therefore, there was but one course left open to us, — to make our way homeward by following the route around Africa. How to provision our ship for so long a journey was a

problem which suggested many difficulties, however.

But at last we found in one of the newspapers the report of a battle between Turkish and British troops at Sheikh Said, near Perim, an island in the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb (Gate of Tears). This gave us reason to believe that Turkey also had now entered the war. Our diligent search for confirmation of this surmise was finally rewarded by finding in one of the papers the announcement that war between the Turkish and British Empires had begun. The new situation thus created suggested a landing in Arabia as our nearest and most hopeful prospect. The course which appeared to be even more reasonable, viz., to join the "Königsberg," was abandoned, in the first place, because the "Choising" had brought word that the "Königsberg" had been sunk in battle somewhere to the north of Australia, and in the second place, because of news that she was bottled up in the Rufiji River. If she

had been sunk, our search for her would be to no purpose, and if she was shut in by a blockade, she would neither have coal, nor could she use any that we might bring her. The fifty men whom we should add to her numbers would only make so many more mouths to feed.

The "Choising" was therefore started on a southerly course, in the first place, to avoid the principal steamer routes, and secondly, to keep out of the region in which the tropical cyclones are most frequent, for the "Choising" was not equal to such a tempest. A sharp lookout was kept, so that we might catch sight of an enemy's ship before we ourselves were discovered. On account of our ship's remarkable speed, the only chance of escape we had, in case we came in contact with a hostile man-of-war, lay in a game of bluff.

The "Choising" was still painted like all Lloyd steamships, viz., black hull, white bulwarks, and ochre brown trimmings. Of course, we could not in safety continue like that. So

we gave our ship a coat of paint that made her look like a Dutchman. But on second thought, we concluded that this was hardly safe, as we were likely to meet a number of vessels in the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, and that some of them might ask us the question, "Who are you?" which already had proved so embarrassing to us. We had no record of seagoing ships on board, except an English list, at the end of which we found the names of a number of English vessels that had been sold by the English to foreign countries. Among these there was one steamship, the "Shenir," that had been sold to a Genoa firm, and that was a vessel of 1700 tons. As this was the exact size of the "Choising," we decided to adopt the "Shenir" as sponsor for our ship, and ere long the legend, "Shenir, Genoa," in large white letters, adorned our stern.

This discovery we had made in the English shipping list was especially welcome to me, as I preferred to pass for an Italian. In view of

Italy's attitude of vacillation, I had reason to believe that even an English warship would hesitate unnecessarily to harass an Italian vessel.

The "Shenir," from Genoa, would naturally be expected to fly the Italian flag. But this was an article which, unfortunately, was not numbered among the possessions of the "Choising." Nor was there any green bunting on board. A green window curtain was discovered by some one, however, and to it we sewed a strip of red, and a strip of white bunting. A committee was then selected from among the men who had artistic ability, and they were soon hard at work painting Italy's coat of arms upon the white strip. The green of the curtain was not of the right shade, however, so we added some yellow paint to a pot of blue, which we happened to have on board, until the desired shade of green was produced, and then dipped the green part of the flag into it.

Chapter IX

FROM PERIM TO HODEIDA

January 7th, 1915, found us in the vicinity of the Straits of Perim. Nothing worthy of note had happened on the way. A number of steamers had been sighted, but always in time to change the course of our vessel toward the coast of Africa. We kept this course until the steamer had disappeared, when we promptly returned to the right one.

Christmas was a very quiet day with us, but our New Year's festivities were all the more hilarious, and we made the most of what little remained of beer and wine aboard the "Choising."

It had been my intention to arrive in the Perim Straits immediately after sundown. In this we were not quite successful, however, and again for the reason that we had no marine

charts. Just as once before we had to draw a chart for ourselves when running into Padang, so now we had been obliged to make one of the Red Sea, and, naturally, our knowledge of the "Choising's" position was not quite accurate. As a consequence, we arrived at the Straits of Perim a few hours too early. I therefore gave orders to turn about and cruise back and forth a while. A large steamer coming from Dachibuti gave us some anxious moments, for we took her to be a man-of-war. She turned out to be a French mail steamer, however. As soon as darkness set in, we steered for the Straits of Perim again, and proceeded at high speed.

I had counted with certainty upon meeting with some sort of patrol in the Straits. In that event we would have been quite helpless, for with the "Choising" we could not face even the smallest hostile war vessel. We could not so much as run away, for any steam launch could have overtaken us. As my chief pur-

pose was to conduct my men to where they could again serve in defence of their country, I determined, if necessary, to sacrifice the "Choising."

In case we should meet a hostile ship close to the African coast, I intended to strand our vessel and leave her there, taking the men with me in the long boats. We should then be ashore in the enemy's territory, and free to do as we might deem best. Should we be overtaken on the northerly side of the Straits, it was my intention to run boldly into the Perim harbor, trusting in Heaven for the outcome, or, if I failed in this, I proposed to run the steamer aground, and venture a bold attack upon the telegraph station which we knew was located in this vicinity. To be prepared for any emergency, the "Choising's" three largest long boats were swung out, lowered to the bulwarks, and made fast. Water, provisions for eight weeks, arms and ammunition, besides a few personal belongings, were stowed away in the boats.

An officer was placed in command of each one of them, and a particular crew designated for duty in it. The only orders given to the boats' crews were, once for all: "Obey your officer."

And again, as darkness came on, we were in much uncertainty with regard to our ship's position. Ahead of us we saw a group of small islands which, we concluded, must be the "Seven Brothers" lying just at the entrance of the Straits. In truth, however, these were the Arabian mountains, whose highest peaks rose into view just above the horizon, a fact which we did not discover until we came in sight of the Perim revolving light. This gave us a good fixed point from which to direct our further course.

Naturally, as we approached the Straits, all hands were on deck. Everyone was keeping a sharp lookout, for our only hope of safety lay in the keenness of our observation. The ship's lights were closely screened. The officers

and petty officers were given orders to make continual rounds through the vessel to see to it that not a single ray of light escaped to reveal our presence, for the Chinese crew of the "Choising" had little appreciation of the importance of this precaution.

Whether I should sail with or without lights had been a question to which I had given much careful thought. If I calmly proceeded with all lights showing, just as any ordinary merchantman would, it might chance that none of the English patrol ships would hold me up, as it was not at all likely that so small a merchant ship as the "Choising" would be regarded with suspicion. A ship sailing with screened lights would, on the contrary, become an object of suspicion to any one who should discover her. Nevertheless, in the end, I decided to have the lights screened.

The Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb is a very narrow water-way. I hugged the African shore as closely as possible, to take advantage of the

darker horizon there, and also because the shore afforded a dark background for the ship. But in spite of all this exercise of caution, we got so near to the revolving light at Perim that its intermittent ray fell upon us like a searchlight, illuminating us for seconds at a time. Moreover, we could see two English warships lying just outside of Perim, and they were signaling to each other in Morse code. During that night's most anxious half hour we muttered many a bitter imprecation upon our engine that at best could make no more than seven and a half miles. But fortune favored us; the Englishmen did not discover us. Perhaps none of the small patrol boats upon which I had reckoned were abroad, for there was a stiff breeze blowing, and the sea was running high. At the end of two trying hours we had got to where we could consider ourselves as safely "through."

In the broader expanse of the Red Sea I kept well without the regular steamship course,

and on the eighth of January, just after dark, we lay with the "Choising" close to Hodeida. The only book that we had from which to inform ourselves with regard to Arabian ways and customs was a "round the world" guide book that would have answered the purpose of directing a wedding journey very well. From it we learned that Hodeida is a large commercial city, and that the Hejaz railroad to Hodeida was in course of construction. As the book was some years old, and as one of my officers remembered that years ago he had met a French engineer who told him that he had been engaged in the construction of a railroad to Hodeida, we took it for granted that the railroad was completed by this time. Even should we be wrong in our supposition, we would still, in all likelihood, be able to get some news of the war, and, in case we should have to continue our journey on the "Choising," we would at least be able to secure charts of the Red Sea.

As we approached Hodeida, or more accurately speaking, as we approached the locality where we expected to find Hodeida — because of our constant lack of marine charts we were never certain of just where we were — we suddenly beheld a long line of electric lights along the shore. Great was our joy at this first sign of a return to civilization. That Hodeida would be provided with electric lights had not entered into our most hopeful expectations.

"It appears to be a very respectable kind of place after all," was the opinion expressed on the bridge. "There even are electric lights. Then surely the railroad will be running. I can see ourselves walking into the central railroad station of Hodeida to-morrow morning, and boarding the special express. In a fortnight we shall be on the North Sea again."

We supposed the row of lights we saw to be on the Hodeida dock, for our "round the world" guide book had told us that Hodeida is a seaport. As we came closer to this dock, my joy

gave way to apprehension, for, as I looked, the lights of the dock seemed suddenly and strangely to move closer together, an eccentricity which is not usual with lights on a dock. As we were quite sober, we decided that it must be the dock that was at fault. I therefore gave orders to stop the "Choising," so that soundings might be taken, from which to learn how far we were from the shore. A depth of forty meters was reported. Now we were evidently only a few thousand meters off from the supposed dock, while, according to the soundings, there must be a distance of several nautical miles between us and the shore. As we realized this, the dock lost much of its attractiveness in our eyes. It must be something else. I gave orders: "Course, to the south!" and ran off a few nautical miles.

I then ordered the four long boats that had been kept in readiness ever since our approach to Perim, to be lowered, and my men got into them. The Captain of the "Choising"

received written orders to take his ship farther out to sea, to spend the next two days in the vicinity of a given point outside of the usual steamship course, and on each of the succeeding nights to return to the place where my men and I had left the ship, and await us there. If we did not return, he was to proceed to Massowa. My reason for wishing the "Choising" to return during the next two nights, was our total lack of any definite knowledge as to who was in control in South Arabia. Our latest information in regard to the war was over three months old, and although it had told of battles between the Turks and the English, the outcome of these battles was unknown to us. It was therefore quite possible that Hodeida was now in the hands of the English. In that event, it was my intention to return to the "Choising" on one of the following nights, and to continue our journey aboard her. The days, I meant to spend somewhere in the desert, in hiding.

At the same time, I arranged for signals by rockets to be given the "Choising" in case I should learn of the proximity of hostile ships that might prove dangerous to her. There was one special signal that meant: "Enemy's ships near. Proceed at once to Massowa." I wanted to avoid exposing the ship unnecessarily to the danger of capture while returning for us.

Soon the "Choising had vanished in the darkness of the night, and my little flotilla of long boats was being vigorously rowed toward the shore. The ship's boats, like all boats that have been out of the water for some time, leaked badly, although days before we left the "Choising" they had been wet both inside and out, had been freshly painted, and kept half filled with water. Our chief effort for the time being was therefore directed toward bailing out the boats. As soon as the day dawned, all sails were set in the boats of our flotilla, and a goodly regatta in the direction of the shore developed.

On our supposed dock the lights were extinguished, and at sunrise we discovered that it had two masts and three smoke stacks, carried guns, and bore the name of "Desaix." It was a French armored cruiser. The other part of the dock revealed itself to be an Italian ship called "Juliana." We had little desire to tie up at this dock, and so directed our course toward land.

Our chief concern now was that we might be discovered by the armored cruiser that was not far distant. The rigging of one of my boats was Chinese, of the other three, German. Four gray boats rigged in this extraordinary fashion could not fail to attract attention. When we had come close enough to the shore, I anchored, and had the other three boats come alongside and made fast. Quickly our masts and rigging disappeared, and we held a consultation with regard to what it was now best to do. The "Choising" was gone. Behind us lay the French armored cruiser and the Italian vessel.

What attitude Italy had assumed toward the war by this time was wholly unknown to me. Before us lay the land with the surf beating between us and it. The indications were that this part of Arabia was now in the hands of the French. To remain in the boats was not possible, as, in the course of the day, we would surely be seen by the Frenchmen who were now enjoying an early morning nap aboard the armored cruiser. My orders therefore were: "Pull for the shore."

Fortunately our heavily laden boats got through the surf without either capsizing or filling. On our way to the shore we met a small Arabian boat whose sole occupant, an Arab, was engaged in fishing, and who in response to our questions gave us the comforting information that Hodeida was now in the hands of the French. The mistake may be ascribed to the fact that although we spoke excellent German, and the Arab had a fluent command of Arabic, we nevertheless failed to under-

stand each other. Just after our boats had passed through the surf and were about 800 meters off shore, they ran aground. All our belongings had therefore to be carried all this distance to land, and through water that was knee deep. Rafts were quickly put together out of the masts, a few boards, some straps, life preservers, and the like. On them we placed our machine guns, the ammunition, etc., so that the transportation might be made as rapidly as possible.

First of all, the machine guns were sent ashore. I waded to land along with them. On the beach an Arab was splashing about in the water. Unarmed, and with every expression of amiability and friendliness of which I am capable, I approached him to offer the hand of friendship. He misunderstood me, however, and departed. A second Arab, who had appeared in the meantime, was quite as unresponsive to my offers of friendship.

While I was employed in having the rest of

our things put ashore, a man in uniform, and mounted on a hedjin, or riding camel, came toward me. The uniform was blue and red. Around his head a cloth was wound. To what country the uniform belonged, I had not the least idea. It might easily have been a French one. This man had the unpleasant distinction of being armed. When he had come to within 600 meters of us, he stopped, cocked his rifle, and stood watching us at our work. Carrying no arms of any kind, I went toward him, beckoned to him, called to him, and tried in every way possible to make him understand that I wished to speak with him. He remained immovable until I had come to within two hundred meters of him; then he raised his rifle and aimed it at me. I stood still. He lowered his rifle, whereupon I moved a few steps nearer. Again he pointed his rifle at me. Again I stopped, and he dropped his rifle. Again I took a few steps forward, and again he aimed at me. I stopped again, and so the teasing

performance went on for several minutes, until I had reached a point not more than fifty meters distant from him. Then his rifle was not again lowered. Consequently I remained standing for some time. An understanding by way of conversation was out of the question with him. He had not understood one of my efforts at speech. He made a sign, however, which could not be misinterpreted, and by which he gave me to understand that I was to remain with my men where we were. After I had assured him, as best I could, that we had no thought of leaving, and that we were delighted to be there, I returned to my men. He mounted his camel and disappeared at a rapid pace in the direction of Hodeida, the white houses of which we could but just distinguish in the far distance.

It now behooved us to make all haste possible, for in three or four hours the French garrison might be upon us. So we worked with all our might to get the things ashore, and so be able to start upon our march into the desert.

It was my intention to remain in the desert during the day, and then at night to send one of my officers to Hodeida to get information. Should this prove unfavorable, I purposed to spend the following day also in the desert, and then, on the next night, to get back to where the "Choising" would pick us up, and to proceed with her, trusting to luck for the future.

Just as we were about to set off on our march, there poured forth from behind the low sand hills of the desert a swarm of Bedouins, — at first about eighty in number, then a hundred or more, all armed. They spread out into a sort of skirmishing line, and then disappeared behind the sand dunes along the beach. Upon seeing this, we, too, formed a skirmishing line, and made ready for a fight. I waited for the first shot to come from the other side. After a few moments there came out from among our opponents twelve unarmed men. They approached us slowly, all the while beckoning with their arms. Laying aside my sword and pistol,

I went toward them. Midway between the two lines we met. Immediately a lively conversation developed, with the unfortunate disadvantage, however, that neither party understood the other. The Bedouins shouted at me, gesticulated violently with the vehemence peculiar to southern races, and made the most remarkable signs, all of which I failed to understand. My own attempt to speak to them in German, English, French, and Malay was of as little avail.

I then had our war flag, which we had with us, brought out, and I called attention in the most explicit manner to the red, white, and black, to the iron cross, to the eagle. They did not understand this either. As I had thought it quite likely that the people of some of the coast regions where we might be forced to land would be unacquainted with the German war flag, I had taken the flag of our merchant marine with me also. It was now produced and displayed to the Arabs, but this, too, they

did not recognize. Then we pointed to the French armored cruiser lying at anchor in the roadstead, shook our fists at it with the most extravagant gestures, and all together roared, "Boom! Boom! Boom!"

The only response we received was a return to their crazy signs. One of these was to hold one hand to the forehead, as though to shade the eyes, and then wag the head violently from side to side. Another was to pass two fingers over the face, either up or down. A third consisted in rubbing the two extended forefingers together, and staring at us idiotically the while. This last one we thought we understood. We interpreted it in this way: Two are rubbing against each other, which means, "We are enemies." With all the means in our power we tried to assure them that quite the reverse was true. Had we been understood, our situation would hardly have been improved by this assurance, for it developed later that this sign meant, "We are

friends," instead of, "We are enemies." As a last resort, we produced a gold piece. To this means of intercourse the Arabians were very susceptible from the outset. We pointed at the eagle, but it did not seem to suggest anything to them. Then I pointed at the head of the Kaiser. This met with instant response, and aroused the liveliest interest. Among their ejaculations we distinguished the word, "Aleman." This was understood on our part, for it could mean nothing other than "German." Instantly, and with ready adaptability to the customs of the country, we all shouted at the top of our voices, "Aleman! Aleman!" And with this, the way to a mutual understanding was opened.

A tremendous and enthusiastic roar of response instantly arose among the Arabs. Their rifles were stacked, and the whole company gathered about us, screaming and shouting, and tumbling over one another in a wild scramble to carry our luggage for us, to drag

the machine guns, and to do us other like service. In a tumult of noise the procession set out in the direction of Hodeida. One of our newly acquired brethren could even speak a few words of English, and from him I learned that Hodeida was in the hands of the Turks.

Our onward march was the occasion for still further excitement. As destitute of people as the desert through which we were passing seemed to be, it nevertheless harbored a countless number of people. In this land, where every boy of twelve carries a rifle and is regarded as a warrior, it did not take long for another crowd of about a hundred Bedouins to gather and come out to meet us, all eager, in the assumption that we were enemies, to have a shot at us. With much excited yelling, our hundred attendants endeavored to convince their approaching hundred colleagues that we were friends. When they had been persuaded that such was the case, we continued on our march with a retinue of two hundred,

only to be met, a half hour later, by two hundred more who were coming to attack us, and who, in turn, had to be convinced by our escort of two hundred, that we were friends.

These explanations always entailed a considerable loss of time, and so it had got to be midday, and we were still on the way. We had had nothing to eat since the evening before, had worked hard and continuously, and had taken a long tramp through the burning sand at a time of day when, under ordinary circumstances, even to ride abroad is avoided. All told, there were probably eight hundred Bedouins moving along with us. They had at last understood that we were Germans, and now carried on quite a variety show as they went along with us, dancing and singing, yelling and shooting off their rifles, and carrying on all sorts of fantastic performances.

In the meantime, the first Turkish officers from Hodeida had arrived, among them several who could speak German. Our mutual

joy at meeting comrades in arms was great. The whole Turkish garrison of Hodeida was marching out against us in the belief that a detachment of the enemy was attempting a landing. Cannons even had been dragged along to assail us.

Surrounded by the Turkish troops, and with banners flying, we made our entry into Hodeida. The people filled the streets and shouted their welcome at us, and flattered us with loud cries of approval and a vigorous clapping of hands at the close of every marching song we sang as we moved along.

Hastily prepared barracks were soon made ready for my men. For the officers, a house in the town was provided. And so, for the present, we were comfortable. From the windows of our house we could see the French armored cruiser peacefully and dreamily rocking upon the blue water a few miles off.

Chapter X

ON TO SANAA

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon of the ninth of January, my men were all settled in their quarters, and I found myself free to consult with the heads of the civil and military authorities at Hodeida with regard to my future course. There were two ways of getting back to Germany open to me: the one, overland, and the other, to continue on my way by sea. Marine charts I could obtain in Hodeida. His Excellency, the Mutessarif of Hodeida, whose name was Raghib, and the colonel of the regiment, also named Raghib, sat together in consultation with me that afternoon.

I learned at once, and much to my regret, that the railroad did not exist. At the same time I received information with regard to the English warships then in the Red Sea. These

consisted chiefly of a number of gunboats and auxiliary cruisers, that could be seen almost daily to the northward of Hodeida, and that were maintaining a sort of blockade line. To continue on the "Choising" under these circumstances was very nearly a hopeless undertaking, especially so in consideration of the probability that spies would very soon make our presence in Hodeida known abroad. The French iron-clad would surely hear of it, and could at once participate in the search for our ship, while her wireless apparatus could flash information of us to all the English and French war vessels in the vicinity. In waters as narrow as the Red Sea is, it would then be quite impossible for the "Choising," with a speed of but seven miles, to elude her pursuers.

The Turkish authorities assured me, moreover, that I would find the overland route to the north both safe and unobstructed, although it would necessarily entail some loss of time. Preparations for the journey by land would re-

quire about a fortnight; then we could start on our march, and, in all likelihood, would reach the railroad in about two months.

When this was fully settled, I waited for the darkness to come, and then, from the roof of our house, three times I sent off the signal with fire balls, as agreed upon, to the waiting "Choising": "Caution! Hostile ships! Proceed at once to Massowa." Later we learned that the "Choising" had reached her destination in safety.

Whereas the health of my men had been excellent up to this time, they now began to show the effects of the extreme climate. In Hodeida the days were terribly hot, the nights very cool. The men of our crew slept in the Turkish barracks along with the soldiers of the Turkish garrison.

In Arabia houses and barracks are constructed very differently from those in our own climate. The barracks provided for my men consisted of a framework of thin boards

covered with matting and straw. They slept side by side on a sort of divan, the cushions of which were stuffed with straw. The water especially was unwholesome, and had to be boiled to make it fit to drink. As a preventive measure against malarial infection, we had to take quinine continuously. But in spite of all our precaution, cases of dysentery and malaria soon began to develop among us. I therefore decided to take my men into the mountains. Sanaa, which is the chief city of Yemen, was recommended to me as being a very healthful place, the water conditions good, and the climate closely resembling that of Europe. Since our journey overland lay by way of Sanaa, it was quite as well to await the completion of our preparations for it at that place as at Hodeida. I decided therefore to start on our march to Sanaa on the Kaiser's birthday.

Before leaving Hodeida we celebrated the anniversary of our Emperor's birth by ceremonies in which the entire Turkish garrison

participated, as did also the entire Turko-Arabian populace, in their own peculiarly enthusiastic fashion. I had in the meantime succeeded in procuring new clothes for my men. Although this, their latest uniform, did not exactly conform to home regulations,— especially the tropical hat designed by myself after the pattern of the hats worn by the colonial troops, and decorated with a large cockade in red, white, and black, the like of which, it is safe to say, had never before been seen in the navy,— nevertheless the men presented a very trim appearance, and made an excellent impression.

The entire garrison marched to the parade square for the ceremony. My little company of men stood in the middle, surrounded by the Turkish troops. Together with the Turkish commander, I passed the combined troops in review; I then made a speech in German in honor of the Kaiser, and ended with three cheers for him, in which our Turkish comrades in arms joined with enthusiasm. After the

cheers for our Emperor had been given, the Turkish commander called for three cheers for the Sultan. A parade march by the combined troops closed the ceremonies. With band playing and banners flying, my men then marched off to a feast — mutton and rice — spread for them in the barracks. The officers were invited by the heads of the local authorities to a banquet — mutton and rice — at the palace of the mayor of Hodeida. Here, also, the heartiest good will was expressed in the toasts that were exchanged. At five o'clock in the afternoon we started on our march to Sanaa.

In the Arabian desert it is only possible to travel at night, as the heat of the day is too intense to be borne by either man or beast. Marching on foot is out of the question even at night. Everybody rides. We also had to follow this custom until we reached the foot of the mountains.

The animals placed at our disposal were horses, mules, and donkeys. Our baggage was

transported by means of a special caravan of camels. It was no light task to keep this newly organized company together at the start, for this was the first time that some of my bluejackets had ever been astride of a four-footed creature. The fun began at once, with the mounting, and there were some very ludicrous scenes. Some of the men took advantage of the time before we started on the march, to practise rapid dismounting, many of them taking their saddles along with them in the attempt. However, relations of friendship sufficient to insure against the occurrence of any serious misunderstanding had soon been established between each rider and his mount, and the caravan was ready to start. We were escorted for some distance by the Turkish officers and garrison.

Soon Hodeida was left behind us in the distance, and we were in the heart of the desert. As far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but sand, — low flat sand hills grown over with

dry grass. Roads, of course, there were none; tracks in the sand, made by the passing of other caravans, — that was all. Our march was frequently interrupted by a halt, for in the beginning especially, it happened every little while that one of the men devoted an over-amount of energy to guiding and mastering his steed, and the ensuing duel usually came off to the humiliation of the rider. The next thing to be done then, was to catch the riderless beast that was making the most of its freedom, a duty which usually devolved upon the officers, as they were the only ones who could ride. With the donkeys and the mules this was no small undertaking. Hardly had we come up to one of these animals when it would turn and kick out vigorously with its hind legs, and it would then require a resort to all the diplomacy and cunning at our command to get hold of it again. That these diversions should not cause us too great a loss of time, one of the officers always rode at the rear end of the cara-

van to round up the riderless steeds, and the steedless riders, and form them into a sort of rear guard.

As the nights were clear and bright with moonlight, we found our way very easily. We rode the whole night through, stopping only occasionally for a half hour's rest. Then we all flung ourselves down in the sand, just where we happened to be, slung our reins around one arm, or tied them to one of our legs, and so found rest for our weary bodies, weary from the strain of the long continued ride.

The region through which we were traveling was not considered a wholly safe one. Robbery and attacks upon small caravans were the order of the day. As early as the second night out, we had an experience of this kind ourselves. Suddenly, in the moonlight, there appeared to one side of our road a dozen or more men mounted on camels. The Turkish gendarmes that had been sent with us as an escort and to guide us on the way, declared them to be robbers,

and immediately got their rifles ready to shoot. When the men on the camels saw the size of our caravan, they vanished among the sand hills quite as suddenly as they had appeared.

On the third day we had completed the journey across the broad strip of desert which lies at the foot of the mountains, and we were now at the entrance into the mountain region. Quite abruptly, almost perpendicularly, the mountains rise from out the flat desert country, and attain a height of some 3600 meters. The route now became more difficult. Over loose stones, through dry beds of rivers and brooks, we climbed slowly upward. At last we were again surrounded by trees and bushes, and the vegetation became quite luxuriant. On many of the highest peaks of the mountains Arab castles were to be seen. The Arabs of this region seem to delight in placing their dwellings on as great and inaccessible a height as possible. At every point where a steep cliff or a narrow defile makes the upward way a

difficult one, some Arab had built him a castle, frequently large and imposing in appearance, a veritable little fortress in itself. It was almost as though we had suddenly been transported back into the Middle Ages.

The people were very friendly, and we met with a pleasant greeting everywhere. Our periods of rest were usually spent in the caravansaries provided for the Turkish troops. For some days our road lay through a picturesque mountain region, and then brought us directly in front of a lofty mountain ridge that seemed to block our way completely, so that we did not know which way to turn. It was a steep, well nigh perpendicular wall of rock. A serpentine path, most difficult to climb, brought us to the summit of the ridge, after hours of exertion. It was a road by no means free from danger. On the one side of us the wall of rock rose straight up; on the other side it dropped straight down. A road, in the ordinary sense of the word, it really was not. It was no

more than a bridle path worn into the rock by many long years of travel, often blocked by a great boulder, and made dangerous with many rolling stones.

The pack animals showed a wonderful ability and power of endurance. Often we came to places so dangerous that I gave orders to dismount, and lead the animals. As a whole, however, the men had come to be quite good riders by this time. We bought eggs and milk on the way whenever we had an opportunity to do so. We carried our cooking utensils with us on one of the animals. An officer, the cook, and another man always preceded the caravan, as a small number of men can travel faster than a larger company. In this way our meals were always ready for us when we arrived at the appointed place. This was a distinct advantage for the men, for the journey was a very fatiguing one, and every hour of sleep was of importance.

I had arranged for a longer halt to be made

VIEW OF HODEIDA

CROSSING THE DESERT

at Menakha. This is a small town situated on the highest point of the principal mountain ridge. From thence the road winds gradually downward until it reaches an extensive plateau on which Sanaa is located. In Menakha we were given a pleasant welcome by both the Turkish troops and the people. At a point some hours distant from the little town, we found the commandant, together with his corps of officers and the troops, awaiting us. A crowd of several hundred people had come with them. Together with the Turkish soldiery, we covered the last part of the way to Menakha, while before us went the great crowd of picturesquely dressed Arabs carrying on a sort of performance, and dancing to the accompaniment of a peculiar kind of song.

Excellent provision had been made for us at Menakha. On account of the weather conditions here, the buildings are all of stone. My men found large barracks awaiting them in which every comfort had been provided, and

where an abundant and appetizing meal was in readiness. For the officers, accommodations had been prepared in the hotel of the town, the only hotel that I ever saw in Arabia. It could even boast of real beds. So far we had slept on "cursis," which consist of a wooden framework filled in with a matting of bast. Menakha lies at a height of about 3400 meters, and we often saw the clouds below us. The days were cool, and the nights were bitterly cold.

We remained in Menakha for two days. I took advantage of this time to visit a number of the Arab dignitaries in their homes. The rooms in all Arab houses are white throughout, while the windows are set with bright colored glass — blue, red, and yellow. Along the walls are low comfortable divans and cushions. On the carpet, in the middle of the room, stands a large brass table on which are the nargilehs.[1] According to the customs of the country, we were always offered a cup of Mocha on these

[1] Oriental water pipes.

occasions, and we spent many a pleasant hour smoking and chatting as best we could with our Arab hosts.

From Menakha our way lay downward again. The Turks were improving the condition of their roadways here, and for some distance from the town we followed a fine, broad and newly made road leading down into the valley, a highway that compared favorably with any in Europe. Our journey now took us through some wonderful mountain scenery. To see camels grazing by the wayside, nibbling at the tops of low trees, never ceased to be a marvelous sight to us. Occasionally, too, we caught a glimpse of a lot of baboons, but never got a shot at one of them, as often as we tried it. By this time the horsemanship of my troop had improved to such a degree that we could maintain a very respectable formation, and now and again could even ride at an easy trot.

The seventh day of our journey found us

approaching the capital city. From the heights, on our way through the passes, we could look down upon a wide and fruitful plateau, sprinkled with many villages and towns, among which Sanaa could readily be distinguished by its size. Turkish officers had ridden out to meet us. Just outside of the city the whole garrison stood lined up, and received us with bands playing gaily. "Deutschland, Deutschland ueber Alles" greeted our ears. The heads of the civil and military authorities came on horseback or in carriages. The people also showed a lively interest in our arrival. Even the French consul, who was being detained in the city as a measure of retaliation, appeared on the balcony of his house. We had come in contact with his English colleague on our way hither, although without meeting him face to face. It must have given him a shock of surprise suddenly to hear "The Watch on the Rhine" sung in his home in the heart of the Arabian mountains.

Unfortunately Sanaa was not as healthful a place as we had hoped to find it. Owing to its great altitude it is very cold there even during the daytime. It takes some time to get accustomed to the climate. A few days after our arrival, eighty per cent of my men were sick with the fever, and unfit to continue on the march. We suffered especially with sudden and severe attacks of cramps in the stomach, and with colds.

The city of Sanaa is a most interesting one. It is divided into three sections, — the Jewish, the Arab, and the Turkish quarters. The city is entirely surrounded by brick walls, and is so built as to form a fortress. Within this fortress the three quarters of the town constitute three distinct fortresses, each enclosed within its own wall, and within each of these, every individual home is itself a distinct little fortress. All the streets and roads are enclosed within high walls, and are so laid out that, like our

trenches, they can be swept throughout their entire length by rifle fire from certain vantage points. The reason for building the towns in this peculiar fashion is to be found in the very unsafe conditions that prevail. Yemen has always had the reputation of being the most turbulent of the Turkish provinces, and in past years violent encounters between the Arabs and the Turks were the order of the day. Frequently these were of so serious a nature that the towns were besieged by garrisons. Sanaa, also, had been starved into surrender to the Arabs only a decade ago. Since that time, however, peace and quiet have reigned in the land.

After a fortnight spent in Sanaa, we learned that the difficulties of the journey overland were so great, that, after all, it would be impossible for me to get my men safely through by this route. The sickness among them compelled me to remain another fortnight in idleness. By that time, though still weak, the

sick had so far recovered as to be able to ride their animals.

So we started on our return journey to Hodeida, there again to entrust ourselves to the sea.

Chapter XI

SHIPWRECK

Our return to Sanaa was accomplished in the same manner as we had traveled thither, and without hindrance of any kind. In order to make arrangements for our onward journey by sea, I had taken a few of my men with me and hurried on ahead of the caravan. In this way I succeded in getting to Hodeida a day and a half ahead of the others. It took the caravan eight days to get there. To be sure, our little advance guard had spent both day and night in the saddle, the only halts being made when we changed animals.

As the "Choising" had been sent on, and there was nothing in the way of steamboats to be had at Hodeida, there was but one thing left for us to do,—to continue our journey in zambuks. A zambuk is a small sailboat much

in use all along the Arabian coast, and is provided with a dhow sail.

I procured two such boats in Hodeida, each about fourteen meters long and four meters wide. These two zambuks I sent to Yabana, a little bay to the north of Hodeida. Because of the French armored cruiser, still sleepily rocking at anchor, a departure from the harbor of Hodeida was out of the question for me. The Frenchman might accidentally have a spell of wakefulness. As I was aware that the country was swarming with English and French spies, I took pains to spread abroad the report that it was our intention to sail from Isa Bay on the thirteenth of March. It happened just as I had foreseen. On the afternoon of the twelfth of March the little and out-of-the-way Isa Bay, where no house, nor tree, nor bush is to be seen, and where there is hardly any water, was honored for the first time since the beginning of the war by the presence of an English gunboat, which hunted

for us with its searchlight all up and down the shore. The poor fellows! How they must have wondered where we were!

On the fourteenth of March, at five o'clock in the afternoon, my fleet sailed from Yabana. The Imperial war flag flew proudly at the mast-head of my flagship, and with three cheers for his Majesty, the Emperor, we began our onward journey. The flagship of the second admiral was in command of Lieutenant Gerdts. We made up for the total lack of any further ships in the fleet by our absolutely correct discipline. As the second zambuk was somewhat larger than mine, the sick were put aboard of it. Malaria, dysentery, and typhus were still prevalent among the men, of whom there were always one or two so ill as to cause us the gravest anxiety. Under no circumstances, however, would I have been willing to leave any of them behind, for their only hope of improvement lay in a change of climate.

With regard to the English I had kept my-

self posted up to the last minute as best I could, and I was aware that an English blockade was being maintained by two gunboats together with the auxiliary cruiser "Empress of Russia," in a line extending from Loheia across Kamaran, Jebel Sebejir to Jebel Soghair. My problem now was how I could run this blockade with my sailboats. To avoid the possibility of both boats being captured at the same time, I gave Lieutenant Gerdts orders to separate from me. A meeting place farther to the north was appointed, where we were to wait a while for each other.

Soon the other zambuk was lost to sight in the darkness of the approaching night. Now, for the first time, our lucky star forsook us, for, as the day dawned, the wind died away entirely, and, after the sun had risen, we discovered to our extreme discomfiture that we were exactly where we had no wish to be, namely, right in the middle of the English blockade line. We expected at any moment

to see the mast-head of an English ship appear above the horizon. Our frame of mind was not of the happiest. The absence of wind detained us more surely than the most superior of foes could have held us. But it had not been without a good reason that I had delayed our departure to the end of the week. I was sufficiently familiar with English customs to know that the gentlemen are disinclined to work during week ends, that is, on Saturdays and Sundays. And nothing did, in fact, come in sight during the entire day.

The breeze, which set in during the course of the afternoon, helped us onward considerably, and by evening, soon after sunset, we could go to rest with the comfortable assurance that with two sailboats, and making but little headway, we had succeeded in running the English blockade.

With my flat-bottomed zambuks it was possible for me to shape my further course so as to keep within the coral reefs of the Farsan

Bank. This is a dangerous and very long coral bank having an extent of about three hundred and fifty nautical miles, and near which large ships dare not venture. It is not wholly free from danger even for small craft. In the course of the following day, my second zambuk came in sight, and received orders to keep by me.

Life on the zambuks was rather pleasant and quite cozy. An abundance of room we did not have, of course. Including the interpreter, the pilot, and the Arabs we had taken with us for service with the sails and the ships, we numbered thirty-five men to each zambuk. With a length of fourteen meters, and a width of four, it can be readily seen that but little space could be allotted to each man. Moreover, a large part of each boat had to be devoted to the storing of provisions, water, ammunition, and the machine guns. To protect ourselves, in a measure at least, from the burning rays of the sun, we stretched woolen blankets across the ship so as to be able to keep our heads in

the shade. Our culinary department was not run on a lavish scale. In each zambuk there was a small open fireplace lined with tin. Here the meals for thirty persons had to be cooked. We tried to make our meals as varied as possible with the limited means at our disposal. Thus, for instance, if we had tough mutton with rice and gravy on one day, we would have rice with gravy and tough mutton on the next, and on the third day, there would be gravy with tough mutton and rice, and so on.

Our boats made but very slow progress. Oftentimes we were becalmed, and there were frequent struggles with head winds and opposing currents. Nor were these troubles from without our only ones, for there were conflicts within our boat as well. These raged most fiercely at night, for then the cockroaches, bedbugs, and lice were especially active. All articles of clothing that were not in use had to be tied fast to something for fear they might run away. In the morning, as soon as the

sun was up, every man of us pulled off his shirt, and the general "early louse hunt" was begun. The record number for one shirt was seventy-four.

On the seventeenth of March I signalled to my fleet: "I intend to anchor in the evening." According to our pilot, we were getting into a vicinity where the reefs made it unsafe even for our small craft to sail at night. By six o'clock in the evening we were drawing near to the island of Marka, where we were to anchor. Our pilot was conducting us to our anchorage. My zambuk led the way. The second one followed at a distance of two hundred meters. There was a pretty stiff breeze blowing, with correspondingly high seas, and we were looking forward with eagerness to getting a little rest in the lee of the sheltering island. But we had made our reckoning without our host in the person of our capable Arab pilot. He directed our course so skilfully that my boat suddenly struck a coral reef. A second

and a third time she pounded so hard that I had grave fears for the safety of the boat. The next moment we were free of the reef, however, and in deeper water. I dropped anchor at once. Then, in order to keep the boat behind us from running aground upon the same reef, I quickly gave her captain orders by signs and shouts to hold off. This he did, but his boat was already so in the midst of the reefs that, in the endeavor to avoid one reef, he struck another. In a moment more I saw a flag run up, a sign that something had happened. The next instant the boat dipped slowly. From the motion of the mast, I knew that the boat was pounding. Suddenly it disappeared, — only the top of the mast could be seen rising on a slant out of the water. It was now just before sundown.

Night sets in very suddenly in these southern latitudes. Ten minutes after the sun has set, it is absolutely dark. There was no moon at the time. Instant help was therefore neces-

sary. Up went the sail on our zambuk. All hands set to work. The anchor was pulled up, and by a difficult manœuvre in which we came near running aground again, we got away, and hastened to the relief of our comrades. I took my boat as close to the submerged zambuk as possible, and cast anchor again. But on account of the reef I was obliged to keep at a distance of four hundred meters. We had no small boats that we could send back and forth. Each zambuk carries but a single dugout, — a very small and narrow paddle boat, made from a single tree trunk, and capable of carrying no more than two men at the most. With the high seas running at the time, their usefulness was a matter of doubt. Nevertheless I sent mine out at once.

In the meantime it had grown dark. We had a lantern aboard our zambuk, but all the many attempts we made to light it, in order to show our ship's position, failed, as the strong wind that was blowing extinguished the light

again and again. "Torchlights!" was my next order. We had taken with us a few torches from both the "Emden" and the "Choising" for possible cases of emergency. These were now brought out and nailed up. The fuses worked all right, but the torches refused to burn. They had grown too damp in the many months that we had carried them about with us.

Suddenly, out of the darkness of the night, I heard voices rising from the water just behind us. The first men from the foundered zambuk had reached us, and, unable to see us in the darkness, they were swimming past us. By shouting, by whistling with the boatswain's whistle, we tried to call them back, and, after some anxious moments, we succeeded in doing so. The men had swum away from the other zambuk, and, having nothing else to guide them, they had followed a star that shone down from the direction of our boat. How many of the men were in the water we

had, of course, no means of knowing. My anxiety for them was great, knowing, as I did, that the water in this vicinity is full of sharks. My greatest concern, however, was for the sick, and I wondered what had been done for them, for many of them were too weak to help themselves. That which was needed above all else now, was for us to show a light. As every other means had failed us, I had the men bring wood, pile it together, pour petroleum on it, and, with little care for the danger we ran of setting our boat afire, we set it in a blaze. In the fire thus kindled, we held our torches until they were dry enough to burn. At the same time we set off a few white fire balls that we had with us, and which, thank God, were still in good condition, although by firing off these rockets, we revealed our presence to other ships for miles about.

At last the two dugouts returned. They were rowed by one man, and in each one lay one of the sick. The others who were too ill

to do anything for themselves were either brought aboard our boat in the same way, or else they were tied to one of the dugouts, and towed along in the water. Meanwhile, all those who could swim were arriving from every side. The men who could not swim — and there were a number such — had put on life-preservers, and were paddling along as best they could. One after another they came aboard. Soon there were fifty of us in my little zambuk, and then it settled so low in the water that it was evident it would hold no more. I therefore ordered everything that could possibly be spared, including provisions and water, to be thrown overboard, in order to lighten the boat sufficiently to carry us all. Finally, all that was left us was our arms, ammunition, and food and water sufficient for three days.

In the meantime our torches had burned low, and I was filled with anxiety lest their light would not hold out until the last man from

the wrecked zambuk had come aboard. At last all were accounted for except the officers, and, with the arrival of the last one of these, the last torch died out. So, for the present at least, all were safe. The wrecked zambuk, according to the reports of the officers in command of it, lay hard aground on an abruptly descending coral reef, and we had reason to be grateful that at least the mast had remained above water. It might have happened quite as well that the zambuk had slipped down the side of the reef, and vanished in the deep. In that case all the sick would surely have been lost, and most likely some of the men who could not swim would also have been drowned.

Near us lay another zambuk, which belonged to the Idriss tribe. The Idriss are an Arab race that is not very friendly to the Turks, and is especially averse to European influence of any kind. From this zambuk a canoe had been sent to the rescue when my second zambuk stranded. But as soon as it was dis-

covered that we were Europeans — a circumstance which was revealed by the tropical hat worn by our doctor — the canoe turned back, and left our men to their fate. To continue our journey in my one greatly overladen boat was a very precarious undertaking, — there were now some seventy persons aboard of her — and especially so in consideration of the very meager supply of provisions we had with us. Therefore, just before sunrise, I sent our Arab interpreter to the Idriss zambuk to offer those in charge of it a large sum of money for the use of their boat for a few days. They refused my offer flatly, however, saying that, should I offer them a hundred thousand pounds, they would do nothing for dogs of Christians. It would, of course, have been an easy matter for me to have made myself master of the desired zambuk by force, and, indeed, it had been my intention to do so as soon as it should be fully day. I was very averse to such a proceeding, however. It might have had some

very unpleasant consequences politically, for it involved the use of armed force against allies, even though these allies were but a race of wild and uncivilized people.

But the day brought us better fortune; our lucky star was once more in the ascendant. A stiff southerly breeze was blowing, which made it possible for me to sail even with my overloaded boat, as I could run before the wind. It gave us the promise of rapid progress during the day. So I left the Idriss boat in peace.

We now hurried to save what we could from the wrecked zambuk. We wanted most of all to recover our arms. The zambuk had sunk still lower during the night. The mast was broken off, and the ship lay on the bottom, tilted downward. By diving, we succeeded in recovering the two machine guns, a few pistols, and a part of the ammunition. Everything else, our provisions, our clothing, and the like, was lost, and, unfortunately, our entire medical outfit as well.

The stiff breeze from the south carried us in a single afternoon over a distance which it would have taken us about six days to cover under the previously existing conditions.

By evening we had arrived at Coonfidah. Here we were given a most friendly welcome. As there had been no opportunity to make special preparation for our coming, a genuine Turkish meal was quickly made ready for us, and we ate it according to the local custom, without the use of plates, forks, or knives. A whole sheep, boiled and stuffed with rice, was placed on the table. With eager hands we set to work to denude the bones of the meat that was on them, and with our fingers we put the rice into our mouths. At Coonfidah we met a Turkish government official and his wife, who were also on their way to Constantinople, and who became our traveling companions. In the further course of our journey this official rendered me good service as dragoman, that is, as interpreter.

It was our good fortune to find a large zambuk while we were in Coonfidah. We chartered it, and so were enabled to continue our journey all together in one boat. Without meeting with further difficulties of any kind, we reached Leet on the afternoon of the twenty-fourth day of March. This town marks the northern extremity of the Farisan Bank, between the coral reefs of which we had so far found safety from pursuit by our English foes. Our further course by water would now take us out into the open sea. It was evident that the English would do all in their power to capture us there. While in Leet, chance placed in my hands a letter that had come from a merchant in Djidda. He wrote that Djidda was closely blockaded by English warships, and that not even a zambuk was allowed to enter the harbor without inspection by the English.

This prohibited our further journey by sea. There was therefore but one way open to us, and that lay overland. We remained in Leet

two days, just long enough to get together the animals needed for our caravan, to provide ourselves with the required amount of water, and to make all other necessary preparations for our onward march.

In Leet occurred the first death in our number. One of our seamen, Keil, had been suffering from a severe attack of typhus ever since our sojourn at Hodeida. The hardships of the shipwreck had proved too much for his already exhausted body, and, as our medical stores had all been lost, we could not even give him medical aid as we journeyed on. He died on the twenty-seventh of March, at three o'clock in the morning. Two of his comrades watched at his bier, as they had at his bedside throughout his illness. We made a row-boat ready, sewed the body in sailcloth, and weighted it with stones. The war flag was then draped over it, and on this was laid the hat and bared sword of the dead. After a brief religious service, we laid the body of our comrade in the boat,

and, taking it out to where the water was deep, we committed it to its last resting place. Three volleys resounded over his watery grave. We did not deem it wise to give our dead a burial on land, as, in all likelihood, the wild and fanatical people of the country would have disturbed his last sleep.

On the twenty-eighth of March we began our onward journey.

Chapter XII

THE ATTACK

It did not prove an altogether easy task to collect in Leet all the camels that we needed for our journey. Leet is a very small town with a population numbering only a few hundred, and with no commercial connections whatever. To facilitate matters with regard to our journey I thought it advisable to pay my respects to the Sheikh of Leet. Never before had a Christian entered his home.

The medium of our conversation was my dragoman. After the customary felicitations had been exchanged, the Sheikh invited me to dine with him. His house was a hut put together of boards and matting, and without windows of any kind. Along two sides of the room stood divans covered with skins. The walls were hung with weapons. The rest of

the furniture of the room consisted of smoking apparatus. Throughout the entire time before dinner, cups of Mocha and of a sort of lemonade were passed around. The coffee was of the Arabian variety, viz., in its preparation the husks of the coffee bean, and not the beans themselves, are boiled. The result is a bitter drink not at all palatable to Europeans, but which, for the sake of politeness, must be swallowed down under any circumstances. The preparations for the meal were begun while we were sitting in the room. First of all, quite a large round mat of woven straw was laid on the bare earth in the middle of the room. Then servants brought in rice, which was heaped in a huge mound in the middle of the mat. A few jars of mixed pickles completed the course. Instead of sitting, we lay down at the table. Spoons were provided, however. Soon we were all cheerfully doing our best to diminish the mountain of rice. Meanwhile the meat course had arrived at the front of the

house. It consisted of a whole roast sheep, which, as such, did not make its appearance on the table however. Knives and forks there were none. Two servants, detailed for this special duty, tore the roast sheep into pieces with their hands, and placed before each one of us, on the mat, the piece that was intended for him.

In the course of the two days that we had to spend in Leet, we succeeded in getting together about ninety camels. With this number we could begin our march. The Sheikh assured us that we would meet with the others en route on the following day. I purchased a large number of straw mats and distributed them among my men. Later, these mats proved an excellent protection against the heat of the sun. Our caravan left Leet in the evening, and we began our march into the desert. Most of the camels carried only burdens, especially water, ammunition, the machine guns, and provisions. The water prospects for our journey were far from favorable. I had to

reckon with the possibility of traveling for days without being able to replenish our water supply.

A journey on camels is necessarily a slow one. To begin with, the camel is not a speedy traveler; furthermore, ours was a caravan of ninety camels at the start, and later, of one hundred and ten. The camels on which the officers rode were the only ones that were allowed to run free. All the others were fastened together by ropes, the muzzle of one being tied by a rope of about four meters' length to the tail of the one in front of it. Naturally, the long line of camels thus formed could not move with the rapidity of a single animal, since the rate of progress of the whole line had to be kept down to the pace of the slowest camel. Moreover, frequent halts had to be made, to re-adjust packs that had slipped, to mend a broken saddle girth, to recover a saddle that had slipped off, and for other like causes of delay.

We kept to a route that follows the coast, close by the sea. This entire region is considered unsafe, robbery and attacks upon passing caravans being the order of the day. From the time we left Leet, our rifles were therefore kept loaded, and ready to shoot. We were fortunate in that the nights were bright with the light of a full moon. As a rule, we began the day's march at four o'clock in the afternoon, and arrived at nine or ten in the morning at the place where we were to rest. On an average, we spent about fourteen to eighteen hours a day in the saddle. As camels are pacers, it is very fatiguing to ride them.

The water places that we passed were mere holes dug into the sand of the desert, and were from fourteen to eighteen meters deep. With leather bags, which we lowered into them, we dipped up the water. The word water, in its European sense, is a misnomer, however, for this evil-smelling, brown or black, thick fluid, swarming with insects. At the bottom of some

of the water holes a dead dog or sheep could be seen. To use it unboiled was therefore utterly out of the question. It frequently had a brackish taste also.

From Leet out, we were escorted by a Turkish officer and seven gendarmes. In addition, we were always accompanied by the sheikh of the district through which we happened to be passing, for it is customary in these parts to take with one, as hostage, the person who is responsible for the safety of the country. Such precautions are not looked upon as being anything unusual here. In this way our march proceeded without interruption of any kind until the thirty-first day of March.

At about eleven o'clock on the morning of this day, we arrived at a watering place which is but a day's march distant from Djidda, our next objective point. At this water hole we found an officer and seventeen gendarmes, who had been sent from Djidda to meet us and to bring us the greetings of our Turkish allies

and of the civil authorities of Djidda. They had also brought us a liberal supply of water. We camped at the water hole as usual, stretched our straw mats and woolen blankets over the low thorny desert growth, and crawled under them far enough to find protection for our heads at least from the scorching heat of the sun.

The cooking was always the first thing undertaken after we had settled down. Dry wood was gathered along the way by all of the men, and so a fire was quickly started. On it our usual meal of rice and, if we were lucky, of mutton, was soon prepared.

When I saw the men who had been sent out from Djidda to meet us, I supposed that the most dangerous part of our journey was behind us. We were now getting into the vicinity of a town in which there was stationed a Turkish garrison of about three hundred men, and I said to myself that if seventeen men could come through unmolested from Djidda

Constantinople
BLACK SEA
Khaldir pasha
TURKEY
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Aleppo
Damascus
CASPIAN SEA
PERSIA
ARABIA
EGYPT
NILE
RIVER
RED SEA
El Weah
El Ula
Sherm Rabigh
Djidda
Leet
Coomfidah
PERSIAN GULF
Lokeia
Sanaa
Mocha
Hodeida
Massuah
Perim
Bab-el-Mandeb

to us, then surely we, a company of fifty men, would be able to travel the same road to Djidda in safety.

This district is inhabited by a tribe that is composed wholly of direct descendants of the Prophet, but which nevertheless is notorious for its uncivilized ways, and its robberies. "Father of the Wolf" is the very appropriate name by which this part of the country is known.

As usual, we began our onward march at four o'clock in the afternoon. Our road now led us somewhat away from the sea. The country round about consists wholly of flat sand drifts. Nowhere can one see farther ahead than a distance of about four hundred meters. Hardly has one sand hill been passed, before another looms up to shut out the view. The drifts are overgrown with tufts of grass attaining a height of about two feet. We were trotting slowly along in the moonlight when suddenly, to our right, from beyond the usual

course followed by caravans, there appeared a number of Bedouins, about twelve or fifteen, riding in a quick trot, and then vanished in the direction from which we had come. This looked rather suspicious, for, as a rule, caravans do not depart from the routes that have been trodden for thousands of years. Still less is it customary to ride off into the desert at a quick trot in the night-time. Our Turkish escort also took these men to be robbers, and told us that there had been talk in Djidda of a band of robbers, numbering about forty, by which this part of the country was infested.

As from Leet I had notified the authorities at Djidda, as well as those at Mecca, of our coming, I had reason to believe that the whole country round about was aware of our approach. Everybody knew, therefore, that our company was not one of the usual merchant caravans with little armed protection, but that, on the contrary, we were a company of fifty well-armed men, who were, moreover, carrying with

them four machine guns. A rumor of forty roaming bandits caused me little disturbance of mind, therefore. Nevertheless, that I might have my men better in hand, and be prepared for any emergency, I took the precaution to divide our one long line of camels into two lines of fifty each. The men were given orders not to go to sleep on their camels, the rifles were all examined, and everything was in readiness for prompt action. The orders to my men were, once for all: "Rally to your commander."

The officers were riding at the head of the caravan. When the first signs of the coming day began to appear behind the mountains that rose on our right, from out the flat surface of the desert, I supposed that all occasion for anxiety was now passed, as Bedouins never make their attacks by daylight. So I slung my rifle across my saddle, unbuckled my heavy cartridge belt, and rode slowly down the line to see whether everything was in order.

I had got no farther than the middle of the

caravan when I suddenly heard a loud, shrill whistle that was instantly followed by a volley of rifle fire. From every side it rained lead into our caravan incessantly, and at close range. The hum and whistle of the bullets made such a noise that the commands I shouted could not be heard. I grabbed my rifle, held it high, jumped from my camel, and, followed by my men, ran to the head of the caravan. Here the firing from both sides was well under way. From out the dusk of the early morning came the flash of the enemy's shots at a distance of about eighty meters. The riflemen themselves we could not see, any more than they could probably see us, when we lay on the ground. The tall forms of the camels, on the other hand, must have been quite visible to the enemy, and it was at these, most likely, that their fire was chiefly directed. The only guide to the position of our foes was the flash of their shots. As we were being fired at from every side, it was difficult to decide in which direction to turn first.

The larger number of my men was with me at the front. A few of them had been given orders to remain with the rear of the caravan.

The most important thing for us to do now was to get our most effective weapons, the machine guns, into play. Of these, two were strapped on camels at the head of the caravan, and two at the rear. In a few minutes we had the machine guns in action, and hardly had their volleys rattled over the enemy's lines, when silence reigned there. This turn in affairs had evidently not been expected. We took advantage of this lull in the enemy's fire to pull down the camels that were still standing, so that they would not form so easy a target, to distribute ammunition, and to get together.

The heaviest fire had poured down upon us from forward to the left, and it was therefore in this direction that I now led my men. Our equipment of fire-arms consisted, all told, of the four machine guns, thirteen German, and three modern Turkish rifles, together with ten

old Turkish rifles that I had secured in Coonfidah to replace those lost with the wrecked zambuk. Of these, the three modern Turkish rifles had been distributed among the officers. In addition, we had twenty-four pistols among us, which, however, could only be of service in an encounter at close range. What the strength of the enemy was, we could not tell as yet. There might be from sixty to eighty men firing rapidly, or there might be many more who fired slowly. Their number was soon to be revealed to us by the coming day. When it was fully light, we could see that within our immediate vicinity the sand hills were black with Bedouins.

My men behaved splendidly. Not one of them showed the least perturbation in spite of the overwhelming superiority in numbers shown by the enemy, of whom there must have been at least three hundred. With one accord the bayonets appeared on all the rifles, although no order to that effect had been given.

During a moment of hesitation at the very outset of the firing, which had now begun in good earnest, and before I had fully decided what it was best to do, the answer to my question came from the man at my right, who called to me.

"Well, what is it?" I asked.

"How soon are we going at it, sir?"

"At what?" was my question in reply.

"Why, at storming the enemy," came the answer from this eighteen-year-old boy.

"Exactly, my man! You're right. Up! March, march!"

With a hearty cheer we were up, and rushing the enemy's line. No doubt, such tactics were a novelty to Bedouins used to attacking a caravan. At any rate, the enemy's fire ceased almost entirely. As our shining bayonets came closer to our foes, they quickly took to flight, followed by our rifle fire, which visibly thinned their ranks. First, we stormed to our left, then to the front, and then to the right.

It was not necessary to follow the same tactics to the rear, as there the enemy had disappeared entirely.

As a result, the narrow circle within which we had been hemmed in by the enemy, had now been widened to one of about 1200 meters' distance from us. The firing had stopped altogether. I now assembled my men close by the caravan. The machine guns remained in position, in readiness to keep off the enemy, as well as to attack them.

In spite of the close range at which the shots had poured in upon us, we had, thank God, only one man wounded among the Germans of my company. A little surprise was in store for me, however, when I looked about me for my friends of the Arab escort. There is a German saying which runs, "He counts his dear ones that are present, to find his six increased to seven." In my case the situation was reversed. Instead of twenty-four gendarmes, we now had only seven. There were

no dead. The missing were found when we reached Djidda. Nearly all of the Arabs we still had with us had been shot in the leg. This was to be accounted for by the circumstance that, instead of advancing toward the enemy, they had run to cover among the camels. My men, who had lain in the sand some thirty to forty meters distant from the camels, had escaped the enemy's fire, which had passed over them. Our foes had aimed at the camels, and so, before our Arabs could pull the animals to their knees, to find complete shelter behind them, the enemy's bullets, in passing between the legs of the camels, had found a mark in the limbs of the heroes who had sought refuge there.

Of the enemy's losses we knew nothing at all. But, as we stormed past the evacuated positions where they had lain, we counted fifteen dead. It is the custom with Bedouins immediately to remove all weapons from the bodies of their fallen comrades. As such had been the case with all but one of the dead,

only one of their rifles fell into our hands. It was a breech loader of the most modern English construction, and was gratefully added to our own equipment. All the distant sand hills were still full of Bedouins, as we could see. In so far as possible, each one of those who showed themselves within range of our rifle fire, received his share of it, the moral effect produced being the principal object in view for the time being.

We could not very well remain lying in the place where we were. I had at first thought that we were dealing with a band of brigands, whose purpose was the usual one, to capture the valuables we had with us. I had therefore come to the conclusion that our assailants, who had suffered considerable loss, had now thought better of their undertaking and had abandoned it.

Quite a number of our camels had been shot. We took from their packs everything that was most necessary to us, water especially, and,

discarding all the less useful things from the burdens of the uninjured camels, replaced them with the indispensables.

I decided to leave the road usually traveled, and turn sharply to the left in the direction of the sea, which I saw shimmering in the distance. If we could reach it, it would afford us protection on one side, leaving us free to face our foes in front and at our rear. It was unfortunate that I could not make use of the machine guns while on the march. Having no limbers with us, the guns had to be carried by camels while we were on the march. To make the caravan more compact, it was divided into from four to six lines, which traveled abreast. The wounded were so placed on the camels that they hung on one side of the animal, which thus afforded them some protection against the flying bullets. Two of the four camels that carried machine guns were placed at the head of the caravan, and the other two at the rear. An advance guard of ten men in a widely extended

skirmish line was sent out about one hundred and fifty meters ahead of the caravan, while a like number of men formed a rear guard at the same distance from it. As there were only nine more men who carried rifles, these formed a protecting guard, as best they could, for the two wings. The men who were armed with pistols only, and so could take part in no engagement except one at close range, remained near the caravan. Lieutenant Gerdts was placed in command of the advance guard, Lieutenant Schmidt of the rear guard, and Lieutenant Gyssling, of the flanks. Lieutenant Wellmann had charge of the caravan itself, where Dr. Lang was also with the sick.

Slowly our company set forth, our flag carried before us. Our hope, that the enemy would not trouble us again, was not to be realized. We had hardly been ten minutes on the march when shots again poured in upon us from every side. There was scarce a sign of our foes to be seen. Their every movement at any

distance of more than four hundred meters was completely hidden by the sand hills. Ten to twenty dark heads popping up with lightning rapidity from behind a sand hill here or there, was all that we could see. Their appearance was always followed the next instant by a volley of shot rattling about the caravan, and before we could get the slightest opportunity to return the fire, the heads had disappeared, and a shower of lead fell upon us from another direction.

At first, strange to say, not one of our number was hit, although the enemy's fire was so incessant that shots were constantly falling about us, little pillars of sand marking the spot where they struck, while sand and gravel was constantly flying in our faces. In a short time it became evident that the greatest pressure was being brought to bear upon our rear guard. At that end of the caravan the men had to turn every few minutes to silence the enemy by a vigorous return of their fire.

I was with the rear guard when a signal came from the front, reporting that strong hostile forces had come in sight in the direction toward which the caravan was moving. When I arrived at the front, I saw that the whole horizon was black with Bedouins. At the same time came the report from the rear that one of the camels carrying the machine guns had been shot. The rear guard had halted, to protect the gun, and Lieutenant Schmidt asked that fresh camels be sent to the rear, so that he might shift the dead camel's load. I now heard the machine guns of the rear guard firing. They had been unstrapped, set up, and brought into action.

I now ordered the caravan to halt, an order which was by no means easy to carry out, however, as most of the camel drivers had taken advantage of the darkness to disappear along with the Arab gendarmes at the beginning of the fight. While on my way back to the rear guard, the report reached me that seaman

Rademacher had fallen, and that Lieutenant Schmidt was mortally wounded, shot through the breast and abdomen. In the meantime the command of the rear guard had devolved upon Lieutenant Wellmann, who had brought with him two camels from the caravan, for the transport of the machine guns.

During our halt, the enemy's fire increased in severity, and a vigorous engagement was soon in progress. Suddenly the firing ceased altogether, and, as I looked about me for the cause, I saw two of the Arab gendarmes, who had remained with us, running toward the enemy's lines, waving large white cloths as they ran. At the same time a third gendarme came to tell me that his comrades wished to parley with the other side. Although this turn in affairs was in no way of my choosing, it was nevertheless a welcome one, for it had now become evident that this was no attack by a mere band of robbers, but one that was thoroughly organized. As our assailants outnumbered us by at least ten to

one, it would have been folly to continue our march at the slow gait of a camel's pace, on an open plain, under continued fire from the enemy. Moreover, my most effective weapon of defence, the machine guns, could not be used while on the march. Nor could our twenty-nine rifles be employed to the best advantage, as there were too few of us to make their fire effective in all the directions from which we would be attacked. In the long run, we would have been shot down one after the other.

We therefore took advantage of the pause in the battle, to fortify ourselves. Hastily we constructed defence works out of camel saddles, which we filled with sand, out of sacks of coffee, rice and other provisions. We strengthened the rampart thus formed by filling it about with sand, as best we could. The camels were placed all together in the middle of the enclosed space, and loop holes were quickly got ready. For want of better material, they were put together out of tin plates and side arms. As all this was

done in great haste, our constructions were, of course, but temporary and incomplete. Our water bottles were quickly buried deep in the sand, where they were least likely to be damaged by the enemy's fire. Within our outer rampart we raised another little fortress, the walls of which were about one meter and a half high, and constructed of empty petroleum cans which we filled with sand. Here were placed the sick who were unfit for duty, the wounded, and the doctor.

As we had to reckon with the possibility of being fired upon from all sides, and our rampart afforded us protection in front only, the camels were so placed as to shelter us from the enemy's fire at the flanks and rear. For our severely wounded, Lieutenant Schmidt, we made a stretcher of rifles and a woolen blanket, on which he was carefully carried to the inner fortress. The seaman, who had fallen, we buried where he fell.

The four machine guns were set up at the

four corners of our defence works, and protected as best they could be by hastily thrown up ramparts of sand. The men armed with rifles were distributed at equal distances along our fortifications. In the spaces between, were stationed the men who were armed with pistols only, and the ammunition was placed within easy reach. Our preparations were hardly completed when the men bringing the enemy's conditions, returned. The demands were that we surrender all arms and ammunition, our camels, all our provisions and water. In addition we were to pay eleven thousand pounds in gold. Upon compliance with these conditions we were to be allowed to proceed unmolested. Well we might!

The parleying had at first been conducted through the dragoman who, with his wife, had joined us at Coonfidah. He also was among the wounded. Shot in the leg! When he went over to the enemy to negotiate, he did not forget to take his wife with him. We did not see

either of them again until we met them in Djidda.

My answer ran: "In the first place, we have no money; in the second, we are guests of the country — get your money in Djidda; thirdly, it is not customary with Germans to surrender their arms."

Hereupon the firing began again. All the camel drivers who had so far remained with us, and a number of the Arab gendarmes also, took advantage of the truce to follow the example of the dragoman and his wife, and disappear. The engagement lasted until darkness came on. We lay very well protected behind our camel saddles and camels. We returned the enemy's fire but sparingly, as our store of ammunition was not large. Moreover, much of the ammunition that had gone down with the wrecked zambuk, and had lain in the water until we fished it out on the following morning, now missed fire. For this reason, I had all the undamaged ammunition placed in readiness near

the machine guns, so that in a possible night attack at close range, I might feel sure of my most effective weapons. The rest of the ammunition was distributed among the rifles. We suffered no further losses during the day's engagement. Several of our camels were shot, but we were none the less protected for this, as a dead camel is quite as good a shield against rifle balls as is a live one. We had eaten nothing during the entire day. Nor could we think of doing so while the daylight lasted. No sooner did one of us raise his head above our rampart of saddles, than the enemy's fire was redoubled.

But our most strenuous work began with the coming of the night. The moon did not rise until about an hour after sunset. During the intervening hour the darkness was so intense that we could see hardly forty or fifty meters ahead. Within our rampart everything was in readiness to withstand a night attack by storm. All rifles and pistols were loaded, the machine guns manned and ready for action,

and the men, with their weapons in hand, were kneeling just behind the rampart. But nothing happened.

As soon as the moon had risen, and we could see as much as three hundred meters ahead, we set to work to improve our position. First of all, water was served to the men, and hard tack distributed. While some of the officers and men remained on guard ready for action, others set to work at deepening the trenches, an undertaking that proceeded but slowly, as we had no proper tools for the work. Still others were engaged in removing the dead camels from within our enclosure. The intense heat caused putrefaction to set in very rapidly. The carcasses swelled up, the tense hides burst, and the entrails exuded. As at this season of the year the wind blows persistently from the north, we took the dead camels to the southward of us, so that the stench might not sicken us.

It was well into the night before we felt free

to take a little rest. The trenches were now so deep that they afforded ample shelter for the men lying in them. We had thrown up mounds of sand on all sides, in addition to the protection afforded us by the camels. Our rifles and pistols had suffered considerably from the incessantly drifting sand. They were now taken apart, a few at a time, cleaned and tested. Then we wrapped our handkerchiefs around the locks, and stuffed small bits of cloth into the muzzles to keep out the sand. All this care was necessary to insure the efficiency of our weapons. That there might always be some one on guard within our fortification, a part of the men remained awake at their posts while the others slept with their loaded rifles in their arms. There was always one officer awake. But nothing of importance occurred during the night.

At nine o'clock that evening, Lieutenant Schmidt, the officer who had been so terribly wounded, died. We dug a grave for him as

deep as possible in the middle of our camping place, and toward eleven o'clock in the night, we four surviving officers ourselves bore our fallen comrade to his grave. There could be no service at the burial. The volley over his freshly made grave was fired by the enemy on the coming morning.

I had brought with me from Hodeida an English-speaking Arab. During the course of the night, as soon as the moon had risen, I sent this man to Djidda, only a ten hours' march by camel distant from us, and only eight by foot. I had found him to be a very reliable and sensible man, and, as I learned later, he succeeded in making his way through the enemy's lines, and took the report of our perilous situation to the military authorities at Djidda.

Half an hour before sunrise I had all hands roused. If the enemy had remained, there would, in all likelihood, be an attack made upon us as soon as the day had fully come. For

the sake of the moral effect, it was my purpose to return their first fire with as heavy volleys as possible. I wished to convince the enemy that we were fully prepared for an attack, and that our fighting strength was undiminished.

What I had expected, happened. As the sun rose, our opponents opened a lively fire upon us. We gave them a vigorous answer with full volleys, and every head that showed itself received its share. This method of procedure perceptibly dampened the fighting spirit of our opponents. Their fire became noticeably weaker and more cautious. Our purpose was achieved.

Just before sunrise all hands were served with a drink of water. During the entire course of the day there was not another opportunity to give them more. Not until after the sun had set could another drink be given them. As we did not find it possible to cook anything even at night, our store of hard tack was drawn upon, and every man stuffed his pockets full.

The enemy fired upon us without intermission. But, as we were pretty well protected, we returned their fire sparingly. That we were not engaged in an ordinary encounter with robbers, but were facing a thoroughly organized attack, now became doubly evident. From our fortified camp we could plainly see two large zambuks lying at anchor near the shore in the far distance. Between them and the Arabs who were besieging us, a regular relief system was being carried on. A large number of our foes must have come in these two ships. Others had arrived by land, which was shown by the fact that far off in the desert, near the horizon, a large number of camels could be seen grazing. On this day, unhappily, two more of our men were severely wounded. Of these, Lanig, a fireman, was shot through the breast and abdomen, and died during the night. Unfortunately, we could give our wounded but little aid, as all our medical stores were lost together with the zambuk that foundered. All

that we had left was the emergency bandage packages that we had brought with us from the "Emden," and a few bottles of brandy.

The day brought forth nothing of special interest. A camel that had escaped from our enclosure was shot by a stray bullet to leeward of us, and the intense odor of decay that the wind brought with it was a source of annoyance. Within our camp itself, some very unpleasant guests had made their appearance. Hundreds and thousands of nasty black beetles about the length of a man's thumb ran about everywhere, carrying the camel dung all over the camp. Our trenches were alive with these insects, and it mattered little how many we killed, for new ones came to fill their places as fast as we killed them. Sleep was impossible. They crawled into our clothing, and ran over our faces. Aside from the annoyance they caused us, they brought a very real danger to our wounded. The tetanus bacilli develop more readily in horse and camel manure than in anything else,

and the inevitable result of this infection is the deadly lockjaw.

The burning heat of the sun made life intolerable during the day. While firing, we could not wear our light-colored head-cloths, as they afforded the enemy too good a target. The intense bright light dazzled our eyes, and made our heads ache. Everything was so hot that we burned our hands when, in firing, they occasionally touched the barrel of our rifles. The grease-soaked camel saddles began to smoulder in the heat, and a faint odor of smoke pervaded the whole camp. We got rid of this annoyance, as best we could, by heaping sand upon the saddles. The sand, carried by the never-ceasing wind, drifted over us incessantly. All day long some of us were kept busy digging out the trenches that had been half refilled with the drifting sand. It crept into our eyes, our ears, our mouths, and our noses. Our eyes became inflamed from its constant irritation. Dampened by sweat, it formed a thick coating

on our faces by which they were disfigured beyond recognition. High in the air, just over our camp, circled from twenty to thirty great vultures.

With the approach of darkness everything within our camp was put into a state of preparedness again. And again I sent a message to Djidda, — this time by two Arab gendarmes disguised as Bedouins. As soon as the moon had risen, those of us who were off duty lay down to rest. The enemy ceased firing as it grew dark.

In the middle of the night we were suddenly wakened by shots fired by some of our sentinels. In a twinkling everyone was at his post, ready to repel the supposed attack. "Where are they?" I asked one of the sentries. "Right here, at a distance of about forty meters some of them were creeping along. There goes one now!" And off sped another bullet. But our supposed enemies were only hyenas and jackals, which, scenting prey, were sneaking

about the camp, and making a meal of the dead camels.

When that night was ended, the sun rose over the horizon for the third time since the beginning of the fight. Our condition was critical. We had heard nothing from the Turkish garrison although, provided my messages had been received, relief might have reached us in the course of the preceding day. We could hold out no longer than to the end of this one day. By that time our supply of water would be exhausted, although each man had been allowed but one small cup full each morning and evening. Without water we were doomed. Whatever final action I decided upon, must therefore be undertaken at once, before my men had lost their strength. On that morning, I gave them orders to force their way through to Djidda as soon as the sun had set, if no relief reached us during the day. In this way I hoped that at least some of us would get there. Whoever fell, must fall. The sick and

the wounded could not be taken with us. But it was not to come to that, thank God!

Toward noon of the third day a man waving a white cloth was seen coming over to us from the enemy, who had ceased firing. I had him brought within our camp, and asked him what he wanted. He replied that the other side would withdraw the demand for our arms, ammunition, camels, provisions, and water, if, instead, we would pay them twenty-two thousand pounds in gold. I conjectured that our foes had learned of the approach of the Turkish garrison, and that, in the customary way of the country, they were trying to get out of us what they could.

I determined to draw out the interview as long as possible, in the hope that the relief expected would arrive in the meantime, and the enemy would then be caught between two fires. For this reason I pictured our situation in as rosy a light as possible, and as though we could wish for nothing better than to spend

a summer vacation in the desert, entertained by the music of whistling bullets about us. I pointed to our empty water cans where they lay buried in the sand, and gave the man to understand that we had water enough to last us four weeks easily, that there was therefore no reason why I should make special concessions, and furthermore, that we had an abundance of ammunition, as he himself had reason to know. In fact the enemy ought to be thankful that I had not come down upon them with my machine guns. The medium of our conversation was a native of Morocco, a man who, at some former time, had been made prisoner of war in Belgium, and, together with a number of other Mohammedans, had been sent back to Turkey. From there he had joined an expedition to Arabia, and had come to Coonfidah, where I ran across him and took him with us. He understood a few words of French.

The enemy's envoy did not seem especially

elated by my representations. He withdrew, only to return again in about half an hour with a repetition of the selfsame terms. To gain time, I now told him that I considered it highly important that I should confer with the leader of our assailants in person, and I therefore besought him to come to me, here in my camp. His apprehensive Highness did not come, but sent, instead, the fierce threat that if we did not pay at once, we should have "beaucoup de combat." I interpreted this to mean that for him it was high time to get his train. So I expressed my surprise that he did not regard what had occurred as "beaucoup de combat." To me it had seemed to be such, I said.

Hereupon there blazed out from the enemy's lines a few more furiously angry volleys, and then silence fell.

A quarter of an hour passed, and then another, and not a shot was heard. Slowly and cautiously we raised our heads above our camel saddle ramparts. Nothing to be seen!

"Careful," I cautioned. "This is only a ruse. Keep down! There is time enough. We can't get away from here before evening in any case."

But when nothing at all happened, we first got up on our knees, then on our feet, and then searched all about with our glasses. Nothing to be seen! Whither our foes had vanished, we had not the least idea. The sand hills of the desert, into which they had gone, concealed them from our view. Apparently they had departed.

For the present I meant under any circumstances to remain where we were. In the first place, I did not feel at all certain that the enemy had really withdrawn, and that this was not merely a ruse to which they had resorted. And secondly, we could not take up our march before nightfall in any case.

About an hour after the firing had ceased, two men on camels appeared in the distance. Their dress and richly caparisoned saddles pro-

claimed them from afar to be no ordinary Bedouins. Waving a white cloth, they came riding toward our camp. As a sign that we understood their purpose, we raised our war flag. When the men had come to within fifty meters of us, they dismounted. I sent my man from Morocco out to them, to ask what they wanted. The answer was that they wished to speak with the commander of the German troop. They had been sent by the Emir of Mecca, who had been informed of the attack upon us, and was sending troops to our relief.

This sounded very promising, but there was after all no surety that it was really true. By this time my sojourn in Arabia had taught me to be suspicious of everything. When I went out to meet the Arabs, it was with drawn sword in hand, and behind me walked one of my men with cocked rifle, ready to shoot. At the camp I left orders to stand ready to fire, and, in case an attack upon me should be made, to shoot

without regard for my person. But again nothing happened.

The two Arabs assured me that Abdullah, the second son of the Emir of Mecca, would soon arrive with a company of soldiers. And truly, in about another half hour we could see in the distance about seventy men riding toward us on camels, and carrying before them a dark red banner emblazoned with verses from the Koran in golden lettering. They were making a sort of music by the beating of drums, and were singing to it. I regarded this proceeding as rather incautious, if, as I assumed, these soldiers were about to enter into an engagement.

Coming toward me, Abdullah saluted. He brought me his father's greetings, and expressed regret for what had occurred. He told me that he had brought us water, and assured me that we could now march on to Djidda in peace, as our assailants had withdrawn.

After I had distributed the water among my men, we proceeded to load the packs on the

camels. This was a wearisome undertaking, and one that was accompanied by many difficulties, as getting camels ready to march has as yet not been included in the training for service in the Imperial navy. Quantities of provisions had to be left behind, as forty of our camels had been shot.

Accompanied by the Emir's troops we left our camp. It was, no doubt, a most unusual occurrence that a Christian should thus be riding through the desert, side by side with the son of the Emir of Mecca, and under the banner of the Prophet. A few minutes later we passed the abandoned positions of our foes. The rascals had actually dug out regular trenches for themselves.

We rode throughout the rest of the day. In the evening we camped beside a spring. Here, for the first time in four days, we could eat a cooked meal, wash ourselves, and lie down to rest. A circumstance of interest was that the water was brought up from a well having a

depth of about forty meters, and yet its temperature was about thirty degrees Centigrade.[1]

As we lay in our camp, close by the shore of the sea, we could see, in the darkness of the night, the restless play of a searchlight flashing over the surface of the water. Our friends, the Englishmen off Djidda!

[1] A depth of about 131 feet, and a temperature of 86 degrees Fahrenheit. Translator.

Chapter XIII

TO THE RAILROAD

We were well cared for at Djidda. The sick and wounded found shelter and attention in a comparatively good military hospital. A difficult point for me to settle now, was how it was best to proceed on our way. I had learned that the Bedouins who had attacked us were in the service of the English, a fact to which the modern English rifles with which they were equipped, attested. The way out of Djidda by sea was also closed to us. During the day we could distinctly see the mast tops of the English blockaders now and again. Nevertheless, I decided to continue our journey in zambuks. It appeared to me that the way by water offered greater possibilities of success than to travel by land.

The first step to be taken was to spread

abroad the report that we intended to go overland. Meanwhile, very secretly, I provided myself with a zambuk and a good pilot. On account of the wounded it was necessary to remain in Djidda for some days. The eighth of April was the day set for our departure. In the harbor at Djidda there was a motorboat in which I made a trip of inspection as far out to sea as possible. I saw no sign of the English. Did they believe in the rumored land journey?

On the night between the eighth and ninth of April the wind was in our favor, and we ran out. We met much better conditions than when we ran the English blockade upon leaving Hodeida. The wind held steady all through the night, and when the sun rose, we were out of sight of the blockading Englishmen. I hugged the shore with my zambuk as well as I could, and took advantage of every reef to creep behind it, and so increase the difficulty of our capture by any possible pursuers. Our progress was slow but sure. We stopped for a short

time, generally not more than a few hours, at several little coast towns to inquire for news, and to purchase fresh provisions. The pilot we had taken with us from Djidda was thoroughly familiar with the waters through which he was conducting us, and spoke English very well. We lay at anchor at night, as the reefs rendered navigation impossible in the dark. At Sherm Rabigh I had to change zambuks, as the one I had procured at Djidda proved to be too weak. Our new zambuk had first of all to be ballasted with sand, as, without either cargo or ballast, the ship could not carry sail.

Our anchoring, in the evening, was always a peculiar manœuvre. In the proper sense of the word anchoring, it was not such at all. The coral reefs between which we were sailing fell off abruptly all round into a great depth of water. The anchoring proceeded in this way: We ran to within a few meters of the coral reefs, where we took down all sails. Two

Arabs, standing ready at the bow, then jumped overboard, each one carrying with him a light rope to which iron hooks were attached. These iron hooks were bored into the cavities of the coral formation just below the surface of the water. And so we lay for the night. This was not always pleasant however, for when the wind shifted, there was danger that it would blow us onto the coral formation to which we had made fast.

On our way to the north we passed several boats sailing in the opposite direction. It is the custom in Arabia for boatmen, in passing, to greet each other with a sort of howl. The Arabs in the boats we met were always amazed to hear, as they sailed by us, the howling of their countrymen in our zambuk energetically supplemented by fifty vigorous voices.

We found practically no coast population along the entire way, but occasionally we met, far out at sea, a little dugout carrying an Arab or two engaged in fishing. We always

hailed these fishermen, and traded rice for fish with them.

Our way northward took us past Mecca. It is the custom with Arabs, when at their prayers five times a day, to face toward their Holy City, and to touch their foreheads to the ground in that direction. So it came about that during the first days of our sailing, the Arabs in our zambuk would stand facing toward the bows, then, later, to starboard, and finally they faced aft.

Without meeting with any special difficulties we reached Sherm Munnaiburra on the twenty-eighth day of April. This is a little sheltered bay about ten nautical miles south of our intended point of destination, El Wegh. From this bay onward our course lay without the shelter of the reefs, and deep water ran close to the shore. We had now been fighting our way onward for nearly six months, and there prevailed among us a general disinclination to trust ourselves to a sailboat over this last short

stretch that might prove dangerous to us on our journey. For this reason we cast anchor at Sherm Munnaiburra, to go overland to El Wegh.

Our coming had been made known to the local authorities by messengers despatched overland, who had arrived before us. A few gendarmes had therefore been sent to the coast to meet us. We got hold of one of them while we were still in the harbor, and sent him out to find camels for us. Before the night had passed, we could see from where we lay, a number of little watch fires burning here and there along the shore, an indication that the animals for our caravan were assembling.

When we rode off on the following day, we took with us nothing more than our arms, and provisions sufficient for one day only. Everything else was left on the zambuk, to take its chances by sea. Fortunately, the zambuk reached its destination without sighting a single hostile ship. On the evening of the

twenty-ninth day of April we were in El Wegh.

The first thing we did here was to get a good bath, and a good sleep. Here, too, we at last had an opportunity to change our underclothing and have it washed, for it required two days to get the necessary camels together at El Wegh.

On the second of May, at eight o'clock in the morning, we began our march. Here in the north, the camels traveled differently than in the south, where, as has been described, they were all tied together so as to form one long line. This is not the custom in the north, where every animal goes along by itself, and must be guided by its own rider. At first this proved a difficult task for my men, but before long they had their camels so well in hand that the caravan could be kept together quite well. We were conducted on our way by Suleiman, Sheikh of El Wegh.

At first our road lay through the desert

with which we were all too familiar. But very soon we came to a mountain region, and passed some charming scenery. The water conditions also were far better than those we had found in the desert. The wells were better kept, and furnished water that was at least drinkable, although not absolutely clean. That we should see running water when we reached the mountain ridge was announced to us by our Arab escort, days before we got there, as a matter of special interest and wonder. If any of us were anticipating the pleasure of bathing in a mountain torrent, our hopes were certainly doomed to disappointment. To be sure, the water in the tiny rivulet that we saw did move, but any one of us could easily have stopped its flow for some time, by stepping into it with both feet.

Up here in the mountains, where it was cooler, we marched by day, and rested at night. Because of our bitter experience in the desert, we made it our habit to intrench ourselves every evening before going to sleep,

much to the astonishment of our Arab escort. But we had finally reached the point where we doubted that anybody was to be trusted. Our fortifications were usually very quickly thrown up, as we had brought with us spades enough for all. And so, each evening saw a small fortified camp arise in the wilderness, and from out its ramparts our four machine guns protruded threateningly. Within our fortifications no watch fire was allowed, but the immediate region all round our camp was well lighted by fires kept burning by our sentinels. We slept, as usual, with loaded rifles in our arms. Comfort was not a prominent feature in this sort of camp. The nights were very cold. The well men among us frequently gave their blankets to the sick, that they might be kept warm. But those of us who had none did not mind it, but followed the old rule which runs: "Lie down on your back and cover yourself with your belly."

The domain of our conductor, Suleiman

Pasha, did not extend quite to El Ula, from whence we expected to go by the Hejaz Railroad. Just before reaching El Ula we had to cross territory that was controlled by another sheikh, one who was at enmity with our friend, and who was illy disposed toward us because we had not hired camels of him for the last four hours of our march, while passing through his territory.

Under these circumstances it was quite possible that we still might have to break our way through by force of arms. Suleiman Pasha also seemed to regard something of this kind as probable. On each day, and from every direction in the mountains, small bands of his adherents joined him, until our caravan had gradually attained a total strength of some four hundred men. It was a most picturesque scene we looked upon as these Bedouins marched along, carrying long Arab flintlocks, clad in their loosely flowing brown garments, and with fluttering bright head-cloths. If, on

the preceding days, we had been the only ones to be cautious enough to intrench, it was now Suleiman Pasha himself who adopted this measure, an evidence to us that it might yet be made pretty hot for us. That night we made special efforts to be well prepared. But it passed without disturbance of any kind.

We were now only one day's journey distant from a railroad station. Our way lay over a high mountain region. We wound along through narrow passes that seemed just fitted for an attack. Through these defiles but one camel could pass at a time, with the result, that the caravan stretched away in so long a line that it could hardly be kept together under the command of one leader. To guard against any possible surprise, Suleiman had organized a regular reconnoitering service, which, in its wonderful efficiency, was worthy of admiration. Perhaps it was also an evidence that he had frequent need of it. Little patrols, mounted on camels, rushed at a full gallop into every

mountain valley, emerged on the other side of the mountain, made their observations, reported, and returned to their places in the caravan.

When we were but a few hours' march distant from El Ula, letters were brought to us. They had been sent to inform us that the angry sheikh who, we had supposed, would attack us, was at the time embroiled in a fight farther to the north, and that we could therefore continue on our way without fear of being molested.

Upon receipt of this information I decided to ride ahead of the caravan, so as to get to the telegraph station at El Ula as soon as possible, order a special train, and make arrangements for the comfort of my men. I was accompanied by Suleiman Pasha, his two sons, and several other dignitaries. We rode at a sharp trot, and covered the last stretch of the journey in a few hours. We had all come to be on very friendly terms with our Sheikh and his

two sons, although our means of conversation were very limited. All three of them showed the greatest interest when, on arriving at the summit of the mountain range, from whence the white houses of El Ula could be seen gleaming out from among the palm trees, I took out my binoculars to get sight at last of a telegraph wire and a railroad. Glasses of this kind are as yet unknown in this region. Each of my Arab friends wanted to get at least one look through them, and so the glasses passed from hand to hand. With every change of hands, the glasses were given an extra turn. How much the last one could see, I can not say.

In order to impress our Arab escort at the very outset with the efficiency of our weapons, I had, some days previously, given Suleiman Pasha, to his great astonishment, an illustration of what our machine guns were capable of in the way of firing. He was eager to be allowed himself to press the button, and manifested a

surprised delight when the gun, which we had got ready for him beforehand, fired an unbroken succession of shots, and brought down pieces of stone from the cliffs at which it was aimed. As all weapons are subjects of great interest to Arabs, I presented Suleiman Pasha and each of his sons with a revolver and the necessary ammunition for it. In addition, I promised to send them a binocular from Germany.

As we were riding across a wide plateau which stretched beyond the limits of our vision, I utilized this opportunity to impress upon the Pasha an idea of Germany's greatness. To his amazement he was told that German warships, when engaged in battle, could fire upon the enemy from a distance considerably greater than the breadth of the plain we were then traversing. Although this was a slight exaggeration, for the tableland stretched from horizon to horizon, it produced the desired effect. The size of the guns from which these shots were fired, I pictured to him by saying that a

sheep could easily run through the barrel of any one of them.

Toward noon we arrived at El Ula, and, much to my surprise, everything was in readiness for us. A special train stood waiting for us, its engine all ready for the order to light the fires. This order was not long delayed.

Two German gentlemen and a number of Turkish officers had come to meet us; letters and news from the colonies in Syria were awaiting us. We were treated to chilled Rhine wine, champagne, peaches, and other delicacies of which we had long been deprived. Being given the choice between a glass of wine and a bath, I chose the former. Why depart so suddenly from a familiar habit to which one had faithfully adhered for weeks past?

A few hours later my men arrived. I rode out a short distance to meet them. With flag flying, and cameras pointed at us from every side, we marched together into the little town where a railroad and a waiting room gave us the

_ _ _ _ _ _ This line marks the approximate course of the journey traveled by Lieut. von Mücke and his men.

first indication that we were returning to civilization. An abundant meal, a greater abundance to drink, and a quick bath (after all!) occupied the next few hours. Then the train moved northward at the wonderful speed of thirty kilometers an hour, and we could yield our weary limbs to the comfort of red-cushioned seats, a luxury long denied us.

Chapter XIV

HOMEWARD BOUND

Henceforth our journey was free from danger of any kind. We traveled by rail over Damascus and Aleppo through Asia Minor to Constantinople. At two points on our journey we had to leave the railroad and travel by wagon, or afoot, as the railroad had not been completed at these places.

Everywhere we were entertained most cordially and hospitably by our German countrymen and by the Turkish authorities. At the railway stations large crowds were always assembled to greet us. There were bands playing and flags flying to welcome us, and roses with which to decorate ourselves. Gifts were showered upon us as we sat in our carriages. New clothing was provided for us, and we shed

no tears when we parted from our old rags and their numerous inhabitants.

My men enjoyed the unprecedented distinction of dining with great dignitaries and men high in authority. Costly presents were bestowed upon us, and our baggage car, that at one time had held nothing but rags and our munitions, now filled up more and more. At some of the way stations at which our train stopped only on our account, large numbers of Bedouins had gathered to see us. They raced along beside our train, and when it stopped, they gave us an exhibition of fancy riding. Many a social glass was drained in the company of our German compatriots.

At last, in Aleppo, we received news from home, the first in ten months. Letters from loved ones and the Iron Cross! What more could the heart desire? There were two large mail bags full, and we devoted the next few days to our mail from home, to reading the many letters and verses that had been sent

us, to writing autographs, and to making away with the cigars, chocolates, and other good things that had been given us.

During the afternoon of Whitsunday our train pulled into the station at Haider Pasha, the Asiatic terminus of the railway. Here my men received their long-wished-for German uniforms, which had been forwarded to them. The officers also had succeeded in procuring for themselves an outfit conforming, in a measure at least, to the demands made by the European civilization to which we were returning.

The chief of our Mediterranean Division, who was also chief of the Turkish fleet, Admiral Souchon, had honored us by coming with his staff to meet us at Haider Pasha. My men quickly fell in line. Our flag, which we had followed for ten months, was flying at our right wing. A few brief commands, the execution of which proved that the brigand existence we had led for months had not destroyed our military

trim, and my sword was lowered before my superior officer:

"I report the landing squad from the 'Emden,' five officers, seven petty officers, and thirty men strong."

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